

Dr. William King

AND THE

Co-operator 1828-1830

Edited by T. W. MERCER.

THE CO-OPERATIVE UNION LIMITED,
HOLYOAKE HOUSE, HANOVER STREET,
MANCHESTER.

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CO-OPERATOR 1828-1830



DR. WILLIAM KING.

A good photograph by his friend, Mons. L. Lullien.

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Dr. WILLIAM KING
AND THE
CO-OPERATOR
1828-1830

With Introduction and Notes by

T. W. MERCER



MANCHESTER:
THE CO-OPERATIVE UNION LIMITED, HOLYOAKE HOUSE,
HANOVER STREET.

1922.

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“Co-operation is a voluntary act,
and all the power in the world cannot
make it compulsory; nor is it desir-
able that it should depend upon any
power but its own.”

—*The Co-operator*, 1829.

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PREFATORY NOTE.

WHEN it was agreed that the Fifty-Fourth Annual Co-operative Congress should be held at Brighton in June, 1922, the General Publications Committee of the Co-operative Union decided that the time was opportune to reprint "The Co-operator," a small co-operative periodical, first published in Brighton by Dr. William King nearly a century ago.

In consequence of that decision, the present volume has been prepared. It includes a faithful reprint of the twenty-eight numbers of "The Co-operator"; a sketch of Dr. King's life and teaching, containing information not previously published; and a few notes contributed by the present writer. Several letters written by Dr. King to other early co-operators are also here reprinted. In "The Co-operator" both spelling and punctuation have been left as they are in the original edition, but a few obvious printer's errors have been corrected.

Hitherto, few students have had an opportunity of reading "The Co-operator," which was undoubtedly the most important of the early magazines devoted to the advocacy of Co-operation. It is believed, therefore, that this volume will be of service to teachers, students, and others interested in the history of Co-operation, and it is hoped that as a result of its publication Dr. King will be restored to his rightful place as a pioneer and father of the co-operative movement in Great Britain.

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GIFT OF

For valuable information, now printed for the first time, and the portraits of Dr. and Mrs. King, I am indebted to Major G. Lionel King, of Brighton. I have also to acknowledge the assistance kindly given me by Mr. H. D. Roberts, director of the Public Library, Museums, and Fine Art Galleries, Brighton, and Mr. R. W. Elliston, assistant secretary, Royal Sussex County Hospital, without whose aid I should not have obtained access to original sources of information.

T. W. MERCER.

Holyoake House,
Manchester,
May, 1922.



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THE LIFE AND TEACHING
OF DR. WILLIAM KING.

THE LIFE AND TEACHING OF DR. WILLIAM KING.

WILLIAM KING, whose right to be regarded as a father of the modern co-operative movement is indisputable, was born at Ipswich, on April 17th, 1786. His father, the Rev. John King, who could trace his descent through a line of sturdy Yorkshiremen, had removed to Ipswich from Richmond, where other members of the family then dwelt. At the time of William King's birth his father was Master of the Ipswich Grammar School, a famous institution established at a very early period. The Great Court Book of the local Corporation proves that this school existed prior to 1477, for an order was then issued "that *all* scholars in the liberties of the borough should be under the government of the master of the Grammar School,"* whose salary was fixed by the Bishop of Norwich.

The Rev. John King had several children. One of his sons, John, was the author of an important legal work, recognised as a standard work in the early part of the last century. Another son, Richard, who entered the Navy, was in the celebrated fight between the "Chesapeake" and the "Shannon," and afterwards became an admiral. William King, author of *The Co-operator*, the subject of the present sketch, although he eventually became a physician, was originally intended for the church, and, accord-

*Glyde, *Moral, Social, and Religious Condition of Ipswich*, page 113.

ing to Lady Noel Byron, began life "by the most painful conflict between filial duty and conscience — a large provision in the church secured for him by his father; but he could not *sign*."*

While William King was quite a child his father became incumbent of Whittenshame Church, near Ipswich. Alluding to this period of his life in a lecture given before the Brighton Medical Society in 1849, he remarked that: "In early life it was my privilege to lay the foundation of a healthy constitution in one of the rich grazing villages of Suffolk; there I drank deeply not only of the best streams of family affection, but of the philosophy of truth and nature; in the quiet meditations of those years, I acquired, under sound parental judgment, those principles which have guided me through life, and which I trust will not desert me at its close. There also I became acquainted with those broad facts in nature which I have since found it was the business of science to classify and explain. And if I have done any little good in my generation . . . it is because I have dipped my cup in early life in the pure streams of natural truth; because I have been an early worshipper in the temple of nature; and because I have been a partaker of the *divini gloria ruris*."†

I.

King's more formal studies, which he commenced at Ipswich Grammar School, were continued at Westminster School, where he was sent at the age of fifteen. At this famous school his first experiences were the reverse of pleasant, and he was much surprised to discover that he could only obtain a

* *Lady Byron Vindicated*, by Harriet Beecher Stowe, page 460.

† *Medical Essays*, by W. King, page 180.

separate bedroom by paying a servant a sovereign for so great a privilege.

Towards the end of his life King started to write an account of his career. Unfortunately, he discontinued writing after a short time, having dealt only with his life at Ipswich and Westminster. These reminiscences may some day be published, if only for the purpose of enabling co-operators to know how King enlarged his knowledge as a student at Westminster School. While there he had many friends among youths who afterwards made a mark in the world. One of his chief associates at this time was Lord Raglan—the youngest son of the Duke of Beaufort—who once acted as military secretary to the Duke of Wellington, and, later, commanded the British Forces in the Crimean War.

Leaving Westminster in due course, King went to Oxford. There he stayed only a very short time before removing to the sister university at Cambridge. At Cambridge, he gave special attention to the subjects of political economy, moral philosophy, and modern history. As a student of these subjects he attended lectures given by Dr. Smyth, whose reputation was then almost at its zenith. King often stated that he derived great benefit from Dr. Smyth's lectures, which undoubtedly stimulated his interest in questions of social philosophy and national government. He also paid great attention to mathematics, a subject which he afterwards regarded as "the key to all knowledge."*

In 1809 King secured his B.A. degree, being twelfth Wrangler in that year. Three years later he took his Master's degree and became a Fellow of Peterhouse College. Soon after he removed to London, where he "walked" St. Bartholomew's Hospital and studied medicine, being taught by

* *Pitman's "Co-operator,"* March, 1864.

Drs. Abernethy, Cooper, Home, and other equally famous lecturers. With Abernethy,* then surgeon of St. Bartholomew's, King conversed frequently on the connection between physiology and medicine, and said later that his teacher often declared that "a bright day was about to dawn upon medicine in connection with physiology"†—a prophecy verified within a very few years. In 1814, he spent the winter at Montpellier, where he attended the lectures on surgery given by M. Delpèche. At a later period he visited Paris, there attending lectures at the hospital of La Charité. While in London, King was for a time private tutor to the children of Mr. George Smith, the well-known banker.‡

This diligence in study brought due reward. After being licensed by the University on June 11th, 1817, King became fully qualified as M.D. (Cantab) in 1819. In the following year he became a Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians, and, as such, delivered the Harveian oration twenty-three years later. King always set a high value on academic distinctions, and was ever justly proud of his connection with Cambridge University. As a writer in the *Brighton Gazette* remarked at the time of his death, "he was what may be called 'a thorough-bred' physician, having obtained his degree (not in the of late common fashion of purchasing it in Scotland but) through a University education; and

*John Abernethy (1764-1831) was surgeon of St. Bartholomew's Hospital from 1815 to 1827, and lecturer on anatomy at the College of Surgeons from 1814 to 1820. His teaching deeply influenced English medical practice with regard to the treatment of disorders of the digestive system.

† *Medical Essays*, by W. King, page xxi.

‡ According to the *Dictionary of National Biography*, one of King's pupils at this time was the future Baron Overstone, the great authority on finance, who was largely responsible for the Bank Charter Act of 1844, by which the constitution of the Bank of England was determined. He was raised to the peerage in 1850.

if he had any pride in this life, it was the pardonable one, when signing his name, of always appending the 'M.D., Cantab.' '*

II.

Dr. King remained at St. Bartholomew's Hospital until 1821, when he married Miss Mary Hooker, a daughter of Dr. Hooker, vicar of Rottingdean, a village near Brighton. Dr. Hooker had a well-known school, often referred to by contemporary writers, who found pleasure in mentioning that among his boys were a nephew of Wellington and also one of Napoleon.† Shortly after his marriage Dr. King settled at Brighton, to be near his wife's relatives, and soon began to take a prominent part in local affairs.

Early in 1823 he was instrumental in establishing a school for infants, one of the first opened in England. This school was for a time conducted by a brother-in-law of Samuel Wilderspin, the early advocate of infant schools, who has an honourable place in the history of education. This man, although an excellent master, was soon dismissed by the school committee, who found that he was a local preacher among the Wesleyan Methodists, and feared that members of the Anglican Church would in consequence be prejudiced and cease to support the school.‡

* *Brighton Gazette*, October 26th, 1865.

† It is often stated that Wellington and Napoleon themselves attended Dr. Hooker's School. This statement is inaccurate; their ages alone make it wrong. Dr. Hooker was taken over Waterloo by one of his old boys, and on his return made two paintings of the field of battle, which are now at the Pavilion, with the relics of the Brighton Volunteer Rifle Corps. (Extracts from a letter written by Major G. Lionel King.)

‡ See W. K.'s letter to Henry Pitman, printed on page 128.

Shortly after this school had been established Dr. King became acquainted with Elizabeth Fry, whose activities were then creating widespread interest, not only in the question of prison reform, but in the condition of the people generally. The great philanthropist frequently visited Brighton, usually to address meetings of members of the Society of Friends. Early in 1824, while staying in the town, she was greatly "distressed by the multitude of applicants for relief."* Dr. Chalmers, the celebrated Scottish divine and economist, had previously convinced her that such applicants could be best assisted by provident societies, through which they could be encouraged to make small deposits. A provident society of this type had already been formed in Brighton, where "there was no lack of benevolent feeling." Elizabeth Fry considered, however, that this society needed to be supplemented by a District Visiting Society, and "after some delays, and much discouragement, the Brighton District Society was established." The objects of this new society were: "The encouragement of industry and frugality among the poor, by visits at their own habitations; the relief of real distress, whether arising from sickness or other causes; and the prevention of mendacity and imposture. . . ."*

Mrs. Fry's chief helper in the work of forming this society was Dr. King, who was already known as "the poor man's doctor."† She herself told Lady Noel Byron, who became acquainted with him in 1826, that she could not have succeeded without the aid of Dr. King, whose "organising head had formed the first district society in England."

* *Memoir of the Life of Elizabeth Fry*, by Two of her Daughters. Vol I., page 452.

† *Memoirs of Henry Crabb Robinson*, by T. Sadler, Vol. III., page 424.

In the work of the society Dr. King took a prominent part, and it was largely owing to his exertions that it in one year "induced the poor to lay by amongst them about £1,000." At the time when this society was established Elizabeth Fry was working in close association with William Allen, the wealthy Quaker, who was then one of Robert Owen's partners at New Lanark. Allen also sometimes visited Brighton, and as he attended more than one meeting of the District Society, it is likely that Dr. King met him on several occasions.

III.

Larger and more important schemes for social improvement soon attracted Dr. King's attention. Early in 1823 efforts were made in various parts of the country to establish mechanics' institutions, the first in England, promoted by Dr. George Birkbeck,* being formed in London in November of that year. After this institution was firmly established similar societies were formed in many towns. Early in 1825 steps were taken to establish a local institution in Brighton. At a meeting held on June 24th, it was decided to form the Brighton Mechanics' Institution. As then defined, the objects of this institution were: "To afford to the members the means of obtaining instruction and information in Mechanics, and in such other branches of Science as are immediately connected therewith."† and it was announced that these objects were to be attained by the establishment of a suitable library, the delivery of lectures, and the formation of a museum.

* Dr. George Birkbeck (1776-1841) was the true founder of Mechanics' Institutions. A good account of his work is given in the *Life of Dr. Birkbeck*, by J. G. Godard, London, 1884.

† Rules and Bye-laws, Brighton Mechanics' Institution, 1825. Public Library, Brighton.

Dr. King, who was the chief promoter of the institution, was one of its vice-presidents, and also a trustee. Largely because of his zealous propaganda, great interest was excited, especially among the working classes. The committee declared, in their first report, that "when the project of such an institution in the town became first the subject of conversation of the hopes and fears expressed by its friends the fear of not meeting with encouragement predominated. . . . From the moment an institution was seriously announced, so much interest was excited in the Brighton public, that the hour of striking a decisive blow was evidently arrived. . . . At our first meeting at the Old Ship, the spacious room would scarcely contain the number who were anxious to witness the proceedings. That stain on the character of Brighton, which has been sometimes imputed to her, that she was wholly immersed in the pursuit of gain, and indifferent to higher and more generous pursuits, was washed away it is hoped *for ever*. . . ."

Within a few weeks after its formation a house, 31 West Street, was taken by the institution, which thus secured accommodation for a reading-room, a library (of 400 volumes), a large lecture room, and several class rooms. With this accommodation its owners were well pleased; the committee proudly boasting: "We resemble more a little university of studies and lectures than a confined and limited provincial institution."

At the formal opening of the institution, on August 20th, 1825, addresses were given by Dr. Birkbeck and Dr. King. Dr. Birkbeck, of whose address a

* "A gentleman was represented as arriving at one of the inns for the purpose of meeting a literary friend; and, in the course of conversation with the waiter, he inquires: "John?" "Sir." "Pray, John, is this a literary place?" "No, sir," replies John, "it is only a watering place." (Thus a speaker at the formal opening of the Institution.)

local journalist remarked that it was "a speech, which for soundness of principles, for aptness, and propriety of illustration, and general impressiveness and effect we have seldom known equalled,"* argued that "the influence of such institutions would be beneficially experienced in settling those important discussions now in agitation between the employers and the employed." Dr. King was no less eloquent. He, said the reporter, "detailed the plan and proceedings of the institution at a length which we regret that our limits preclude us from entering into. We are the more pained at this circumstance," he added, "because while on the one hand the copiousness and extent of the speech prevent our giving it as a whole; on the other, we are convinced that to compress or to shorten it would be only to render it injustice. Suffice it to state, so complete were its details that there was scarcely any part of the proceedings of the institution, whether regarding its past, its present, or its future circumstances, which were left unnoticed or unexplained. . . ."

The institution, so auspiciously started, made an excellent beginning. Two hundred subscriptions were collected, and nearly three hundred members were enrolled in a very short time. During its first winter session lectures were given on Botany and the Origin and Progress of Knowledge, in addition to an inaugural lecture on "The General Principles of Natural Philosophy, and the Construction and Use of the Air Pump," delivered by Dr. King, who also conducted one class in Mathematics and another in Natural Philosophy. But the rather extravagant expectations of those who formed the institution were quickly disappointed. Enthusiasm soon flagged, interest in its work waned, and at the end of 1828 the first Mechanics' Institution formed in Brighton died because it lacked members.

* *Brighton Herald*, August 17th, 1825.

IV.

Possibly less interest was taken in the work of the Mechanics' Institution because the thoughts of its most intelligent members were turning towards "mutual co-operation." Mechanics' Institutions were everywhere the nursing-mothers of co-operative trading associations; and that in Brighton was no exception to the general rule. Early in 1827 the editor of the *Co-operative Magazine* reported that when he visited Brighton "a very intelligent, and also very industrious and hard-working mechanic observed to us, that the working classes ought to form themselves into associations . . . and send their choice person . . . to the community as soon as it commenced,"* and in a letter, dated April 12th, 1827, sent from 31 West Street, Brighton,† W. Bryan announced that "a society is formed in this town, called the Brighton Co-operative Benevolent Fund Association. The objects of this association are: first, to raise by a small weekly contribution a fund for the purpose of enabling proper persons (who have not themselves the means) to join Co-operative Communities,‡ by giving the whole or part of the capital, as the circumstances of the individual may require; and, secondly, to spread a knowledge of the co-operative system."§

The leading spirits in the new association were men who attended classes taught by Dr. King, who certainly encouraged them in their co-operative enterprise. He himself claimed that as a result of his teaching "their minds were no doubt prepared there for this society."|| Probably he also encouraged

* *Co-operative Magazine*, April, 1827.

† The headquarters of the Mechanics' Institution. See above, page xviii.

‡ See pages 3 and 135.

§ *Co-operative Magazine*, May, 1827.

|| See W. K.'s letter to Henry Brougham, M.P., printed on page 110.

his students to take a further step in co-operation and to form the Co-operative Trading Association established in July, 1827, as an adjunct to the parent body. This new association, started by a few members immediately their united capital amounted to £5, soon had forty shareholders. In the first week after trading was commenced only half-a-crown was received for goods sold to members, but in a few weeks the society was transacting "a respectable trade," and in about a year its sales amounted to £38 weekly.

William Bryan, secretary to the Co-operative Benevolent Fund Association, clearly realised the economic advantage of collective purchasing. In a letter published in the *Co-operative Magazine*,* he pointed out "that if fifty or even thirty heads of families of these classes, who receive for their labour on an average £50 per annum each, were to co-operate in spending their money, they might on the lowest calculation by purchasing their articles in large quantities, save two shillings in the pound, which would be, if fifty families joined, £260 per annum." Bryan was sufficiently optimistic to believe that "if each person still continued to pay the retail price for the article, that sum would in less than five years enable the persons to form a community of co-operation and community of property," notwithstanding that "this plan would not subject the parties to any privation in securing sufficient capital." The chief merit of the new plan, in his opinion, was that it enabled working-class co-operators to act independently of well-disposed capitalists, such as Robert Owen, and to understand that "whenever the labouring classes come to the resolve that 'we shall do for ourselves,' the thing is done, however slowly."†

* *Co-operative Magazine*, May, 1827.

† See Note VI.—Amount of Capital Required, page 136.

Encouraged by these hopes and promises many persons hastened to join the association, believing it "not unlikely" that a community would "be formed of its members in the course of a year or two."* Among those who joined were agricultural labourers, house-carpenters, bricklayers, painters, cabinetmakers, turners, printers, gardeners, dress-makers, bakers, tailors, tinmen, coppersmiths, shoemakers, bookbinders, and grocers, in short, workers who by their united labour "could perform all the various trades required in a community, with the exception of fabricating linen, worsted, &c."

The hopes of the members of the association were shared by Dr. King, who respected their ambitions, and praised their efforts. Recognising that ignorance was the chief obstacle in their way, he, on May 1st, 1828, commenced to issue *The Co-operator*, a small monthly magazine, in the pages of which he endeavoured to make the principles of co-operation "intelligible" to the working classes. It was quite time that someone made such an attempt. Those who had written on the subject prior to the publication of *The Co-operator* had somehow so contrived to hide the principles of voluntary association in metaphysical fogs and foolish speculations that plain men could hardly understand what was meant by "mutual co-operation, united labour, and equality of enjoyments." Owen, Thompson, Minter Morgan, and the members of the London Co-operative Society were inspired by a genuine desire to help the working classes; but very few manual workers were at first able to understand how their fine philosophical principles could be reduced to daily practice.

Dr. King, however, in the very first number of his magazine, addressed the workers in language that all could understand. He revealed the causes from

* *Co-operative Magazine*, September, 1827.

which their miseries arose ; showed how the workers could improve their conditions by working together ; demonstrated how even the poorest could amass capital by co-operative shopkeeping ; and foretold how voluntary co-operation, practised at first in connection with simple, everyday actions, such as buying and consuming, would lead to ownership and associated industry, and eventually carry the workers forward to a new society, in which there would be " a perpetual progress " of mankind " towards an endless perfection of character and happiness."

V.

Nor was Dr. King content merely to instruct the poor in the principles of co-operation ; he also advised them how to conduct their business and manage their affairs in a businesslike way, emphasising the importance of co-operative education for members and their children, good management, cash trading, accurate book-keeping, publicity, and democratic administration ; at the same time showing the responsibility resting upon each to promote the welfare of all. Moreover, realising how often the funds of co-operative societies were jeopardised in the absence of legal protection, he urged Henry Brougham, M.P., then the foremost champion of popular rights, to consider the advisability of promoting legislation favourable to the growth of co-operative associations.*

Aided thus by Dr. King, and stimulated to greater exertions by his teaching and encouragement, the local co-operators redoubled their exertions. The members of the original Brighton Society soon leased a plot of land, on which some of their number were employed, and upon which others hoped eventually

* See W. K.'s letter to Henry Brougham, M.P., printed on page 119.

to engage in co-operative industry. As Jonathan Wood, the society's second storekeeper, told Holyoake in 1872, "they did wonders enough to prove what might have been done had the people been honest enough to do it."*

Other societies were also established in Brighton and the surrounding neighbourhood as men studied *The Co-operator* and better understood the plan of action proposed by its author. Within a few months four societies had been established in Brighton, two in the adjoining town of Worthing, and others at Tunbridge Wells, Canterbury, and Greenwich in Kent, in addition to many formed in different parts of England.

In every place where men read *The Co-operator* and talked of the success of the Brighton Society, attempts were made to establish societies on the plan recommended by Dr. King. The Birmingham Society, formed in 1828, was started by William Pare, who corresponded regularly with Dr. King and did much to circulate copies of *The Co-operator* in the Midlands and North of England. One such copy, which found its way to Halifax, was the cause of the formation of a society in that town†; another led to the formation of a society at Chester. When in August, 1830, Dr. King decided not to publish any more numbers of his paper, he was able to state that three hundred societies had been started as a direct result of his teaching. By that time he was acknowledged as a leader by co-operators in all parts of England. "To the benevolent author of *The Co-operator*," said the editor of the *Co-operative Magazine*, "the working classes are under lasting obligation, as from his pen they have received much

* *History of Co-operation* (1906), by G. J. Holyoake, Vol. II., page 481.

† *History of Co-operation* (1906), by G. J. Holyoake, Vol. II., page 492.

valuable instruction; indeed, his publication has become a sort of text-book to co-operators."* Another writer remarked that, "Next in importance to the great work of planting the first societies, we may rank the intellectual labour to promulgate the *true principles*, with a knowledge of the practice, of co-operation. We avail ourselves eagerly of this opportunity to record our grateful testimony to the pre-eminence of the Brighton *Co-operator* in this respect. . . . The immense majority of the Co-operative Trading Associations formed since 1828 . . . have been nourished on the sound doctrine of *The Co-operator*."†

VI.

Dr. King decided to cease publishing *The Co-operator* for several reasons. Although his teaching had created a workers' co-operative movement, he had not succeeded in pleasing every co-operator. William Lovett, who afterwards became prominent as a Chartist leader, complained that he had "in a measure, apologised for the competitive system,"‡ while the insertion in *The Co-operator* of a letter written by "a gentleman . . . holding a high and important office in the State,"§ who advised the workers to bespeak "the goodwill and countenance of some patron," caused the *Co-operative Magazine* to sound "the tocsin of alarm" and the British Association for Promoting Co-operative Knowledge to declare that "these dangerous propositions must be blotted out" from the pages of his publication.

Robert Owen's injudicious attacks on existing

* *Co-operative Magazine*, March, 1830.

† *Co-operative Magazine*, February, 1830.

‡ See page 78, also Note XVII., page 130.

§ See page 85, also Note XIX., page 140.

religious organisations were at the same time causing the clergy and ministers of all denominations to preach against co-operation, and, as a consequence, Dr. King was openly accused of infidelity and sedition. The Rev. W. L. Pope, of Tunbridge Wells, asserted that his motives were "wicked," that his principles were "horrid," and that he himself was "an infidel."* Other critics were almost equally abusive.

Attacks of this character, although wholly unjustifiable, were not only an annoyance to Dr. King, they were very injurious to his prospects as a physician. He had a growing family to support, and his advocacy of co-operation had already cost him much. By that time, too, the original Brighton Society was breaking up† and other local societies had disappeared. Early in 1830, William Bryan, first secretary of the Co-operative Benevolent Association, left Brighton suddenly for some unexplained reason, and was next heard of in New York, while a number of its members, preferring private enterprise to communal ownership, "departed with their share of the capital and . . . built themselves a fishing-boat at a cost of £140, out of which venture they realised a weekly profit of £4."‡ The society had travelled far since it was first established and directed by Dr. King's pupils, and it is likely that his interest in its affairs was in consequence less keen than formerly.

Moreover, he had already accomplished the task which he essayed when he published the first of his

* *A Letter to the Rev. W. L. Pope, Tunbridge Wells* (1829). See also Note XX., page 141.

† [The Brighton Society] "has entirely failed, owing to its violation of some of the fundamental principles of co-operation." Thus Lady Noel Byron, in a letter written to Thomas Hirst, on October 13th, 1832. This letter was first printed in the *Co-operative News*, January 9th, 1892.

‡ *The Co-operative Movement* (1890), by Beatrice Potter (Mrs. Sidney Webb), page 45.

monthly numbers. As he said in the last *Co-operator* published: "The object for which they were commenced has been attained. The principles of Co-operation have been disseminated among the working classes, and made intelligible to them. The certainty of success, if those principles be acted upon, has been, we believe we may say, demonstrated, and three hundred societies have started up to put those principles to the test."

Active co-operators, almost all of whom were his own disciples, regretted his decision, and urged Dr. King to publish a new edition of *The Co-operator*. Mr. Thomas Hirst, of Huddersfield, who presided over the Fourth Co-operative Congress held at Liverpool in 1832, said "it would be a lasting disgrace to co-operators to suffer that work to sink into oblivion," for "it had converted hundreds, if not thousands, to the cause,"* and the Congress by resolution requested its "philanthropic and talented author" to republish the work. This he was unwilling to do; hence *The Co-operator* is now reprinted for the first time. A little later, in 1833, Lady Noel Byron, whose friend and adviser he had by that time become, proposed that he should visit Huddersfield to aid co-operation there, but "his professional objects" prevented him from going, and he had no further active connection with the early co-operative movement.

VII.

Other interests were already engaging his attention. Several years before he had begun to "observe and study" the medical value of the artificial mineral waters then being prepared at Brighton, becoming convinced as a result of his inquiries that Dr. Strove,

* *Report of the Fourth Co-operative Congress, Liverpool, 1832*, page 33.

of Dresden, had "introduced among us one of the greatest blessings which this country has known in the present day."* He soon became a firm believer in the new method of treating certain diseases, finding ere long that "I had a new remedy in my hands, with which I could relieve patients whom I was formerly obliged to dismiss as incurable." As a consequence his services were much in demand by the "class of amateur patients," and from that time onward he had "a class of cases to attend whom, even in the way of business, the ordinary busy practitioner is apt to consider a 'bore'—those not unfrequent sufferers known as 'confirmed invalids,' 'hopeless incurables,' &c."†

Still keenly interested in education, he joined the Central Society of Education,‡ a pioneer body led by Lord Brougham and Thomas Wyse, M.P., and contributed a paper to its second publication in which he urged that instruction in hygiene and physiology should be given in the schools. A few years later, in 1847, he was instrumental in forming the Brighton Medical Society. Of this body, which in time had ninety members, he was the first president, and at its meetings delivered many lectures on medical subjects. In these lectures, afterwards

* *Observations on the Artificial Mineral Waters of Dr. Strove, of Dresden* (1826), by W. King, page 27.

† *Brighton Gazette*, October 26th, 1865.

‡ "The Central Society of Education was formed under the presidency of Lord Denman, the Chief Justice of the King's Bench, with Sir Thomas Wyse, M.P., another active labourer in the good cause, for its chairman. Its objects were to collect, classify, and diffuse information concerning the education of all classes, in every department, and . . . to publish articles on the systems already established, either in England or abroad, to discuss the value of various branches and means of acquiring knowledge. . . . Volumes of interesting essays were published from time to time."—*George Birkbeck: The Pioneer of Popular Education* (1884), by J. G. Godard, page 143.

published in a volume entitled *Medical Essays*, Dr. King mixed homely wit and proverbial wisdom with scientific instruction, and delighted to interlard his teaching with quotations drawn from the most diverse sources.*

In 1842, Dr. King was appointed consulting physician to the Royal Sussex County Hospital, a post which he filled to the satisfaction of all connected with that institution, until 1861, when he resigned owing to his advancing years. While at the hospital he displayed an almost paternal interest in the welfare of the younger medical students, never hesitating to admonish in oracular fashion any who strayed from the narrow paths of personal virtue and professional decorum.

During these years, too, Dr. King was for a short time one of the Commissioners—appointed under an Act of Parliament, passed in 1826, which made provision for the “better regulating, paving, and managing the town and the poor thereof”—who administered the affairs of Brighton previous to its incorporation in 1854. Perhaps the most hotly debated question with which he had to deal as a member of the local governing body was the purchase of the Royal Pavilion. To the purchase of this building—offered to the town by the Commissioners of Woods and Forests for the sum of £53,000—there was strong opposition. Dr. King ardently supported the purchase, and took a prominent part in promoting the Bill enabling the Commissioners to raise the necessary money. As might be expected, he also keenly interested himself

* For example, in an essay on *Milk and the Natural History of the Cow*, read in 1840, he quoted Homer, Herodotus, Hippocrates, Aristotle, Kant, Pliny, Cowper, Horace, Byron, Wordsworth, and many other authors, both sacred and profane, in a few pages.

in all questions relating to public health and sanitation.*

VIII.

Towards the close of his life Dr. King was again in touch with prominent workers in the co-operative movement, although for a short time only. During the thirty years that had elapsed since the last number of *The Co-operator* appeared great changes had taken place, both in the form of co-operative societies and in the aims of co-operators. Almost all of the three hundred societies at work in August, 1830, had disappeared, the great majority leaving scarcely any trace of their transitory existence. Owenite Socialism, which once made a great noise in the world, had come to an ignoble end in 1845 with the total collapse of the Queenwood community; almost all of the earlier leaders were either dead or in retirement; the remaining co-operators were no longer eager to depart from the "old immoral world" or to taste the inexhaustible delights of "mutual co-operation" in a small community.

The seat of authority in the co-operative movement had been removed from Brighton to Rochdale, where men of sturdy character had re-discovered the principles of co-operation and adapted Dr. King's teaching to the needs of a new time. Incorporating

* On January 19th, 1850, as Dr. King was going to the hospital, he met a prominent citizen of Brighton, who "made some rude observations about the drainage of the town, wishing that those who dabbled between cesspools were obliged to live in one." To these remarks Dr. King made no reply, but went home and wrote the offender a letter, in which he stated that, "if each person is not to enjoy his own opinion there's an end to discussion. We must proceed to elect a despotic king of Brighton, and let all others hold their tongue, and not even think! . . . Nor do I think it right, just, tolerable, or supportable, that the whole town should be forced to make good the grave defects of individual houses and proprietors. Those who have built bad houses should be compelled to make them good." (MS. Book in Brighton Public Library.)

in their system the essential parts of the Brighton form of organisation, they had succeeded in making consumers' co-operation popular by rewarding consumers in proportion to their loyalty as purchasers and multipliable by making membership in their society open to all who wished to join it.*

In less than twenty years after the Rochdale Pioneers opened their first store nearly three hundred and fifty societies were established.† The activities of these societies were recorded in a new *Co-operator*, which Henry Pitman commenced to publish in June, 1860. He apparently knew very little of the earlier movement, and was unaware that Dr. King had published a similar publication thirty years previously. Few copies of that old *Co-operator* had been saved from the wreck of the first societies, but in December, 1862, Mr. Matthew Davenport Hill gave Pitman eight numbers of Dr. King's journal.‡ Fourteen months later Mr. Hill reported that he had communicated with Dr. King, who had lent him a complete set of *The Co-operator*, and he advised Pitman to introduce his new journal to the editor of the old one.

Acting upon this advice, Henry Pitman wrote to Dr. King, from whom he received several interesting

*The *aims* of Rochdale Pioneers were hardly distinguishable from those of their predecessors, the *methods* which they adopted were different. Whereas the early co-operators restricted membership in their societies to a small number of persons who were agreed in principle, the Rochdale Pioneers invited all to join their society. They also divided periodically almost the whole of the money saved by joint purchasing among members who traded at their store, whereas the first co-operative advocates held that all sums so saved should be added to the collectively-owned indivisible capital of the society. The Rochdale system eliminated profit, but perpetuated interest—albeit at a fixed and moderate rate. Dr. King and his disciples proposed to abolish both.

† *Thirty-three Years of Co-operation in Rochdale* (1882) by G. J. Holyoake, page vi.

‡ *Pitman's Co-operator*, February 1864.

letters during the next eighteen months.* These prove that Dr. King was still a co-operative advocate who firmly believed in "the good time coming." He rejoiced because the co-operative movement was spreading so rapidly, and while he was not enamoured by the Rochdale system he recognised that dividends would attract many whom argument could never reach. The really satisfactory thing, in his opinion, was that the co-operative system, having "taken firm root" and been found practicable, had become one of the institutions of the country.

Unfortunately, this friendship between King and Pitman only continued long enough to reveal the true relation of the earlier and later movements. Dr. King died at his residence in Brighton on Thursday, October 19th, 1865, and his body was interred in the burial ground attached to Hove Parish Church on the following Wednesday—long before the new generation of co-operators knew how deeply they were indebted to the teaching and pioneer work of "The Patriarch of Co-operation."

IX.

A man of fine presence, Dr. King was one whose striking personality and intellectual gifts fitted him to take the lead in any enterprise with which he was connected. "In stature, features, expression of countenance, and intellectual ability, he exceeded the average of men," less "favoured by nature."† A remarkable conversationalist, he was ever ready to discuss almost everything "in the heavens above, or the earth below, or the waters beneath," adding to the discussion on any subject much curious information collected from out-of-the-way sources.

* See pages 127-132.

† *Brighton Gazette*, October 26th, 1865.

Although he refused to take Holy Orders* he was deeply interested in theology, and philosophy, and metaphysics. Crabb Robinson, who first met him in February, 1851, described him as "a sort of philosophical enthusiast." "Dr. King," he wrote, "is a free-thinker in the best sense of the word, but a conformist. He is a constant attendant and a great admirer of Robertson,† and calls himself a churchman; yet to-day he spoke of the English clergy as men who had five millions per annum given them to misrepresent Christianity."‡

Lady Noel Byron, whose friend and adviser Dr. King was for nearly thirty years, found in him "at once the curious combination of the Christian and the cynic—of reverence for MAN and contempt for MEN. . . . The example of Christ, imperfectly as it may be understood by him, has been ever before his eyes; he woke to the thought of following it, and he went to rest consoled or rebuked by it."§

* See above page xii.

† "Dr. K— was expressing surprise at the thoughtfulness and freshness of last Sunday's sermon . . . and telling me of the slow and silent results of my teaching in revolutionising long habits of thought, life, &c. I remarked, that what surprised me most was, that I had been left so long unmolested, in spite of great grumbling, dissatisfaction, and almost personal hatred. He said: 'I can tell you the reason. You preach positively instead of negatively; you state truths which they cannot deny; they can only talk of tendencies, consequences, &c.; they can only say it is dangerous, they dare not say it is false; if you were once to preach defensively or controversially it would be all over with you, and it would do your heart and mind harm besides; but every one sees that you have a message and a truth to establish; you set up your truth, and they are dismayed to find, if *that* be true, their view is knocked down; but you did not knock it down.' These were not his words, but the substance of what he said, and I think, on the whole, that it is not untrue."—*Life and Letters of the Rev. F. W. Robertson* (1865), by Stopford A. Brooke. Vol. I., page 302.

‡ *Memoirs of Henry Crabb Robinson*, by T. Sadler. Vol. III., page 393.

§ *Memoirs of Henry Crabb Robinson*, by T. Sadler. Vol. III., page 423.

A philanthropist in the true meaning of that much-abused word, Dr. King never established an extensive practice among the rich, although he numbered among his friends many people prominent in his day. He aspired to be "the poor man's doctor;" his consulting room was always open to the poor; and his services as a physician were given most willingly to those who could offer him no remuneration.* Yet, since no one perceived more clearly than he did that "charity creates a multitude of sins,"† his chief desire was to help the poor to help each other to master "pauperism, misery, and crime" by forming co-operative associations.

X.

For many years after his death British co-operators seemed to have entirely forgotten Dr. King; and authors of works on Co-operation, believing that the co-operative movement sprang from the loins of Robert Owen, traced its history from his communities to Rochdale, and taught that the Rochdale Pioneers derived their knowledge and inspiration directly from Owen's teaching. Even when reference was made to the first Co-operative Trading Fund Associa-

* "The editor happened to know an aged lady at Brighton, who for many years was bedridden, and whose declining life was cheered by the unfailing Sunday afternoon visits of Dr. King. His long friendly talks were looked forward to as the event of the week."—*Memoirs of Henry Crabb Robinson*, by T. Sadler. Vol. III., page 424.

† "This passed in 1848 between him and Robertson. Robertson said to me, 'I want to know something about ragged schools.' I replied, 'You had better ask Dr. King; he knows more about them.' 'I?' said Dr. King. 'I take care to know nothing of ragged schools, lest they should make *me* ragged.' Robertson did not see through it. Perhaps I had been taught to understand such suicidal speeches by my cousin, Lord Melbourne."—Thus Lady Noel Byron to Crabb Robinson.—*Memoirs of Henry Crabb Robinson*, by T. Sadler. Vol. III., page 423.

tion Dr. King's name was mentioned only to be dismissed in a line. It now appears that he exerted a deep and abiding influence on co-operative thought and policy in Great Britain. It is at least arguable that the co-operative movement would have developed along different lines if men who formed the Rochdale Equitable Pioneers' Society in 1844 had not read *The Co-operator* and profited by the teaching of Dr. King. The men who founded the famous co-operative provision store in Toad Lane were familiar with the history of co-operation in Brighton. James Smithies—almost the first co-operator to look forward to wholesale trading and shipowning—at one time possessed a bound volume of *The Co-operator*, afterwards placed in the Pioneers' Library, which was read by Samuel Ashworth (their first shopman) and others of the Pioneers. Doubtless many tributaries contributed to swell the main stream of consumers' co-operation, but that which had its rise in Brighton was not least among them.

Co-operators in other countries, viewing the co-operative movement in Great Britain from a greater distance, and seeing it in different perspective, see clearly how great a contribution Dr. King made to the theory and practice of consumers' co-operation. Sixty years ago, Victor Huber,* the great German co-operator, remarked that "as regards acute perception and clearness of thought . . . and also complete mastery of the situation, the Brighton *Co-operator* is one of the most remarkable produc-

*Victor Aimé Huber, "the father of Co-operation in Germany." visited England several times between 1824 and 1852. In 1854 he made a special inquiry into the history and work of the co-operative movement in Great Britain, and on his return to Germany, in 1855, published a rather large work embodying the results of his inquiries. This work contains much valuable information not otherwise obtainable.

tions in British literature." Dr. Hans Müller,* who contributed a summary of *The Co-operator's* teaching to the second *Year Book of International Co-operation*, described Dr. King as "a very important co-operative theorist, a thinker, who even in our time and with regard to our contemporary movement has much to say." More recent writers, especially in America, bear similar testimony. Mr. Albert Sonnichsen calls Dr. King the "first prophet" of modern co-operation, whose "vision penetrated clearly into the distant future;"† Mr. John Graham Brooks refers to him as "one of the intellectual pioneers of English co-operation [who] avoided most of the mistakes about competition into which later writers fell;"‡ and eulogistic accounts of him are included in several co-operative text-books published in Germany, Finland, Russia, and other European countries.§

British co-operators also, who have hitherto known little of Dr. King, and who have in consequence failed to give him his rightful place in the history of co-operation, will in future regard him differently. They will see in him an original man, a revolutionary

* Dr. Hans Müller, born at Rostock in 1867, was appointed secretary of the Swiss Co-operative Union in 1896, and of the International Co-operative Alliance in 1908, continuing to hold the latter office until 1914. In 1900 he visited Great Britain for the purpose of studying British co-operative institutions. The author of the standard history of co-operation in Switzerland, he has also published many books and pamphlets on the economic theory of co-operation. In 1905 he delivered the Inaugural Address at the Paisley Congress, being the first foreign co-operator to enjoy that distinction.

† *Consumers' Co-operation* (1919), by Albert Sonnichsen, pages 15-21.

‡ *Labor's Challenge to the Social Order* (1920), by J. G. Brooks, page 290.

§ As the present volume is being prepared the post brings the first number of a new Polish co-operative paper, which contains an article on "*Doktor Wiljam King.*"

thinker, a Christian Socialist who anticipated the teaching of Maurice and his school. And when, as time passes, and the history of the co-operative movement lengthens, the greater makers of Co-operative Democracy begin to stand out like mountain peaks against a background of forgotten Time, it will appear that William King was perhaps the chief of these.

T. W. MERCER.



NOTE.

DR. WILLIAM KING'S WRITINGS.

The writings of Dr. King, who was an energetic pamphleteer, include the following works :—

"A Letter on the subject of Mechanics' Institutions" (extracted from the *Brighton Herald*). Brighton, 1825.

"Observations on the Artificial Mineral Waters of Dr. Strove, of Dresden, prepared at Brighton ; with Cases." Brighton, 1826.
The Co-operator. Brighton, 1828-30.

"The Institutions of De Fellenberg." London, 1842.

"Medical Essays read before the Brighton and Sussex Medico-Chirurgical Society." Brighton, 1850.

"Cemeteries : Two Lectures delivered before the Members of the Brighton Medico-Chirurgical Society." Brighton, 1853.

"Thoughts and Suggestions on the Teaching of Christ." (Posthumous). London, 1872.*

* This work was published in 1872, after its author's death, at the request of Lady Byron, "who left him, in her will, a sum of money, hoping, as she said, that it might be in part dedicated to the promulgation of those ideas which had given her so much pleasure and consolation." This volume was dedicated to Dr. King's widow, "who was (to use his own words) the greatest blessing that God ever bestowed upon a man."

PORTRAITS OF DR. KING.

The following is a list of portraits of Dr. King at present in existence :—

Painting by —, in possession of Gratwicke Boxall ; this has been photographed and engraved small.

Large Chalk Drawing, now in the possession of Major G. Lionel King.

Picture by Paul Mulready, in hands of C. Stewart-King.

Picture by Masquerier, now in the possession of Major G. Lionel King.

Photo by L. Lieuliette, reproduced as frontispiece to this volume.

Photo by Merrick, Brighton, reproduced and included in this volume.

Bust at the Royal Pavilion, Brighton.

THE CO-OPERATOR.



Merrick, Boston.

DR. KING.

From a Photograph.



Roberts, Boston.

MRS. KING.

From a Photograph taken in 1861.

THE CO-OPERATOR.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNION ARE POWER :
POWER, DIRECTED BY KNOWLEDGE, IS HAPPINESS :
HAPPINESS IS THE END OF CREATION.

No. 1.

MAY 1, 1828.

1d.

A Co-operative Society, like all other Societies, such as benefit Clubs, Trade Societies, Savings' Banks, is for the purpose of avoiding some evils, which men are exposed to when they act singly, and of obtaining some advantages which they must otherwise be deprived of.

The evils which CO-OPERATION is intended to combat, are some of the greatest to which men are liable, viz. the great and increasing difficulties of providing for our families, and the proportionate danger of our falling into PAUPERISM and CRIME.

Let us consider these more at length.

The rate of wages has been gradually diminishing for some hundred years, so that now it is not above one-third of what it used to be—but this is not all, for the same causes continuing to act, the wages must go on diminishing till a workman will not be able to maintain a family; and by the same rule, he will at last not be able to maintain himself. This conclusion it is frightful to think of, but whether we think of it or not, it will march on in its own silent way, till it unexpectedly overwhelms us like a flood.

But are we certain that this is true?—are we really approaching any thing like starvation, in spite of any labor and industry we may exert? I am afraid that this is certainly true; and I will give you other reasons for thinking so.

PAUPERISM.

Why do people become paupers?—because they must either go to the parish, or starve. And this necessity has operated so widely, that the independent day laborer has almost ceased to exist. The country laborer who can, in many respects, live cheaper than we can in a town; who can have his garden, and raise his own potatoes, &c. can now very seldom live without the parish aid: and it is a common rule to make an allowance for each child, above a certain number. The same situation has begun to beset the mechanic. He is frequently obliged to go without work a day or two in the week, or to have his wages lowered. If this goes on, he must also come to the parish.

But parish relief does not cure the evil—for many have too much principle or pride to apply; and many are deterred, sometimes by living at a distance, and sometimes by the opposition and frowns they meet with: so that there are many families after all, who, though they do not starve, yet live constantly upon short allowance, and many days do not put victuals into their mouths.

But farther—it might seem very strange to talk of pauperism and starvation at this rate, if it were for the first time; but I am only repeating what has been said by every body and every newspaper. We know that not long ago, hundreds and thousands of mechanics in the manufacturing counties, would have died of starvation, if the hand of charity had not helped them, and that many did, nevertheless, die of fevers and diseases, brought on by famine: and we all know by the newspapers, that no subject is more hackneyed in parliament, than the state of the poor, and none has engaged the attention of government more anxiously: and it appears, by the Report of the Committee of the House of Commons, lately published, that there are large classes of people in Scotland, whose wages just enable them to exist, and no more.

CRIME.

I will now pass on to the great and serious evil connected with low wages and pauperism, which is also as plainly acknowledged as the other, which is the increase of CRIME. When men cannot live upon their own wages, they will look to other means, and necessity will drive them upon crimes they would never, otherwise, have thought of. The great increase in crime, of late years, is mentioned by the Judges with the deepest regret. It is said to be three times greater than it was twenty years ago, in proportion to the population. It is not so much for great crimes, like murder and forgery, but for others, connected with low wages and difficulty of living, that men are now brought to justice. What one man will do from necessity, another will—and all will be gradually brought, to make up by dishonesty and crime, for the defect of their wages.

If these things are not enough to frighten us, I don't know what is—PAUPERISM and CRIME are the greatest evils in existence. But in fact they do frighten us, and alarm every body who thinks; and they make many begin to think who never thought before.

But you will say, why state these things so strongly?—why aggravate evils which are bad enough of themselves? Our situation is hard, but it cannot be helped; and what can't be cured must be endured. We are now come to the very point at issue; the pith of the question. These evils may be cured; and the remedy is in our own hands. The remedy is Co-OPERATION, and I shall now explain its principles and advantages.

Co-operation means, literally, "working together." Union is strength in all cases, and without exception. Many hands make short work. What one man cannot do, two may. What is impossible for a few, is easy for many. But before many can work, they must join hand in hand; they must know their object, and feel a common interest and a common tie. At present we work one against another,—when one of us gets work, another loses it; and we seem natural enemies to each other. The plain reason of this is, because we work for others, not for ourselves. Let us therefore begin to work for OURSELVES, and not entirely for others. Again—at present, in working for others, we get for ourselves only a small part, some say, one-eighth, some, one-fourth of the produce of our work. If, in any way, we could work for ourselves, we should get the whole. How is this to be done? As we have no capital, we are obliged to find a master to give us employment, and we must work for common wages.

This is true—it is CAPITAL we want: and now let us consider how this capital is to be raised. We shall find that it is by no means an impossibility. Union and saving will accumulate it.

Many of us belong to Friendly Societies, which have accumulated a large capital, by small weekly deposits; many of us have saved sums of money in the Savings' Banks; the thing, therefore, is very possible, for it has already been done in one way, and may therefore be done in another. We must form ourselves into a Society for this especial purpose; we must form a fund by weekly deposits; as soon as it is large enough, we must lay it out in various commodities, which we must place in a common store, from which all members must purchase their common necessities, and the profit will form a common capital to be again laid out in the commodities most wanted. Thus we shall have two sources of accumulation—the WEEKLY SUBSCRIPTION, and the PROFIT on articles sold. Suppose 200 persons thus unite, and subscribe each, a shilling a week, and by purchasing at their own store, produce a profit of £20. a week, they will accumulate at the rate of £30. a week, or £1560. a year. This capital, by being judiciously turned over, will accumulate even faster than at the rate here mentioned, and may be employed in any way the Society may think most advisable.

The Society will be able now to find work for some of its own members, the whole produce of whose labor will be common property, instead of that small part of which we spoke. As the capital accumulates still farther, it will employ all the members, and then the advantages will be considerable indeed. Every member of the society will work, there will be no idlers. All the property will be common property, there will be no Pauperism or Crime. When any of the members are ill, they will live and have medical attendance at the common expense.

When the capital has accumulated sufficiently, the Society may purchase land, live upon it, cultivate it themselves, and produce any manufactures they please, and so provide for all their wants of food, clothing, and houses. The Society will then be called a Community.

When the members are too old to work, they will still live comfortably among their friends, and end their days in peace and plenty, instead of a workhouse.

When a man dies, the Community will receive his widow and children into their bosom; she will not know the pangs of desertion, nor be obliged to send her children to the parish.

The children will be fed, clothed and educated at the common expense, and when grown up may become members of the Community, or go into the world properly prepared to earn their own living.

But if the members choose to remain in a town, instead of going into a community, they may derive all the advantages from the Society, which I have stated. We *must* go to a shop every day to buy food and necessities—why then should we not go to our own shop? We *must* send our children to school—why should we not have a school of our own, where we could bring up our children to useful trades, and make them good workmen and sober lads? We might also bring up our girls to learn all the useful work of women, and such manufactures as might be beneficial to the Society.

If we continue to go on as we do at present, every year makes our situation more distressing, and brings us and our children nearer to PAUPERISM and CRIME.

If we unite, as I have shewn we may do, either in a Society or a Community, in a few years we shall have capital, comfort and independence.

If the evils of our present state are so grievous, and the advantages of Co-operation promise to be so great, you may ask, why

has this not been seen before? I answer in one word, IGNORANCE. We are born IGNORANT—brought up IGNORANT—we live and die IGNORANT. We are like men groping in thick darkness. We might walk over a precipice as easily as not. We are totally blind. Having ears we hear not: having eyes we see not. The first step, therefore, towards Co-operation, and the first and last step to make it successful, is to remove this ignorance by every means in our power. We must take this thick veil from our eyes, and behold, learn and study, the glorious creation of God. The knowledge of this creation is abundantly scattered about us—we have only to pick it up. IGNORANCE, PAUPERISM and CRIME, are three inseparable companions.

Before I conclude, I must add a few words respecting the moral and religious principles of such a Community. Little, however, need be said, because it is self-evident that the fundamental basis of such a Society, is to “love your neighbour as yourself.” This is the great social Commandment of our Saviour, and it is equally the great main spring of the actions of such a Community. No man but a real christian is fit for such a Community. In common life, it is impossible to act upon this principle. We must love ourselves first—our neighbour second. But in a Community our own interest is much better secured in that of the Community, than we could possibly secure to ourselves; therefore interest and duty would go hand in hand.

Let us now take a short view of the whole question.

THINGS AS THEY ARE.

*Ignorance,
Pauperism,
Crime,
Envy,
Hatred,
Malice,
All Uncharitableness.*

THINGS AS THEY MAY BE.

*Useful Knowledge,
Moral and Religious Principles,
Independence,
Provision for Sickness, Old Age,
Widows, Orphans.
Common Labour,
Common Property.*

Societies upon this principle, viz. that of accumulating a common Capital, and investing it in Trade, and so making TEN per cent. of it, instead of investing it in the FUNDS, at only four or four and a half, with the intention of ultimately purchasing land, and living in COMMUNITY, have been established at the following places:—

*36, Red Lion Square, London;
37, West Street, Brighton;
10, Queen's Place, Brighton;
20, Marine Place, Worthing:*

Where Works on the subject of Co-operation may be had.

N.B.—The 2nd Number of the “CO-OPERATOR” will be published on June 1, 1828.

THE CO-OPERATOR.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNION ARE POWER :
POWER, DIRECTED BY KNOWLEDGE, IS HAPPINESS :
HAPPINESS IS THE END OF CREATION.

No. 2.

JUNE 1, 1828.

1d.

STAFFORDSHIRE POTTERIES.

The following extracts are taken from a private letter, written by a man of business, living at the POTTERIES, in Staffordshire. In consequence of the abundance of fine clay, which is found in that part of England, manufactories have long been established, for making all kinds of Porcelain, China, and Pottery ware, but more particularly the fine sorts. The demand for them has been so great, among the rich, that immense fortunes have been made by many of the masters engaged in the trade. Immense sums of money must therefore have been spent, among the WORKING CLASSES, who produced these valuable articles. Yet the portion, which fell to the share of the workmen has been extremely small, and appears, by this letter, to be still diminishing. It is for this reason, that the "EXTRACTS" are laid before the friends of Co-operation, in order to establish one grand fundamental truth, viz. "That wages have diminished, are diminishing, and must continue to diminish, as long as the WORKING CLASSES work for others: and that when they begin to work for THEMSELVES, they will begin to accumulate that CAPITAL, and those COMFORTS, which are now possessed only by the MASTERS, and what are called the UPPER CLASSES."

EXTRACTS.

"No accurate statement of wages can be obtained from the masters, because it would expose to public view, the internal state of the business, and the *unprecedented state of low wages*, which every manufacturer feels to be somewhat disgraceful from whatever cause it may proceed."

"The master would always wish to have it thought by the public, that he gives more for the manufacturing his goods, than he really does."

"It is admitted, by every person, resident in this country, that there is a great mass of SUFFERING in the Staffordshire Potteries, owing to the low state of wages—the want of employment—and the high price of the necessaries of life."

"That there is a great deal of suffering, may be also inferred from a well known fact, viz. the extreme difficulty of collecting the Poor Rates: many who are chargeable with them, are found on being visited, actually to stand in need of their aid. They are more fit to receive charity, than to pay taxes. Hundreds of WORKMEN are hovering round the Parish Vestry, for relief. Many of these, a few years ago, were in comfortable circumstances, and would have revolted at the idea of applying for parochial relief. This Parish is more than TEN THOUSAND POUNDS in debt."

"At some manufactories; married men, having families, are working SIX FULL DAYS, and four nights, till NINE and TEN o'clock, for SEVEN, EIGHT, and ELEVEN shillings a week. The very highest wages, of the swiftest men at such manufactories, are never more than THIRTEEN shillings a-week, for FIFTEEN or SIXTEEN hours a day, of INTENSE labor."

"Lads, from sixteen to twenty years of age, are working fifteen hours a-day, for two shillings, HALF A CROWN, and THREE shillings a-week. Females from sixteen to twenty years of age, are earning two shillings, three shillings, and three shillings and six-pence a-week; the hours of labor being from twelve to fifteen hours a-day."

"Men, having large families of six, seven, or eight children, and earning EIGHT or TEN shillings a-week, are more distressed than any other persons in the community, because, either they can get no employment for their children, or if employed, the earnings are not more than one shilling a-week for a boy or girl of fourteen or fifteen years of age."

"Workmen, who are earning eight shillings a-week, have, in many cases, *five* shillings' worth of *truck*, i. e. *goods in kind*, at *thirty* or *fifty* per cent. *dearer* than the market price."

"Many prices for manufacturing *common ware*, are three and four times *lower* than they were twenty years ago, when the price of agricultural produce was only one-third or one-half of the present price."

"Many branches of the Pottery business, are exceedingly unhealthy. The smoke, sulphur, and pernicious gasses, which the workmen constantly inhale, bring on disease and a lingering state of suffering, which is much increased and aggravated, for want of the comforts and conveniences of life. The unhealthiness of this kind of labour has been much increased, of late years, by the greater and closer confinement of the workmen. The Potter, having less wages for his labor, is obliged to labor more hours. Formerly, he used to take a certain quantity of exercise in the day—in the field, or in his garden, but now he is obliged to be in the manufactory constantly, almost day and night."

"This is no high colored, or exaggerated account, but is founded in truth; and might be proved to be correct, by hundreds of eye-witnesses, before the House of Commons, or any tribunal in the kingdom. Bills of wages might be obtained, to confirm the statement, which would be so many facts, which could not be contradicted."

"This is the state of the *working classes* in general, throughout the Potteries. A few individuals are more fortunate. In certain situations and departments, in which more genius, skill, and cleverness are required, some workmen are doing well, and earning what may be called liberal wages, i. e. *thirty shillings* a-week. But the number of these bears no more proportion to the great mass of the workmen, than the officers of a regiment do to the mass of privates of which it is composed."

"In most manufactories, there are from *seven* to *ten* weeks' play or holiday, in the course of a year."

"Those who keep holiday, not more than four or five weeks in the year, are considered fortunate. One large manufactory has kept

holiday *ten* weeks, since Christmas. All these holidays tend greatly to add to the distress of the workman, as he is unable to lay by any thing beforehand, out of his small earnings, to meet the holiday, and nine times out of ten, the master refuses to lend any thing."

REMARKS.

1. These "extracts" prove that there is a great deal of distress among the workmen of the Potteries. They work long days, and sometimes during part of the night. They work beyond their own strength. They bring upon themselves diseases, and a weak state of health, by their exertions. They have no time for amusement or relaxation. The women work, as well as the men. As soon as the children are old enough, they begin their labor. Having once begun, they go on, day after day, and year after year, till their bodies are worn out—a premature old age comes on—they have laid by no provision for themselves; they must, therefore, die in a workhouse.

2. All this labor produces a proportionable quantity of China and Pottery. It is no benefit to the workmen, as they do not use it. It goes to supply the wants of the public. But china is a durable article, if taken care of. The public get supplied. More china is made than is actually wanted. The same number of workmen is no longer required. Some of them, therefore, are either turned off, or their wages lowered. This consequence is inevitable: it actually happens. The abundance of the produce makes it of less value—and makes the workmen of less value. The more the workman toils, the harder he works, the more time he labors, the greater is the quantity of work done, the less its value, and the less the value of the workman. Therefore, his wages and comforts are diminishing every day.

3. This is the first time we have heard of the distress of the Potters. The men have never made any disturbance, and are unknown to the public. We have heard of distress in other manufactories, but not in these. The letter, from which we have made these extracts, is a private one, and fell into our way, accidentally.

4. The conclusion which seems most fair to be drawn, from these circumstances, is, that the distress of the working classes is universal. Wherever you go, you hear of hard work, low wages, and pauperism. This distress is the inevitable consequence of working for others, instead of working for themselves. *Hard work, over production, low wages*, follow each other in a natural and necessary order.

5. The state of things is not the fault of the masters, nor of the inhumanity, nor of the contrivances of any person, or set of persons. We know a master manufacturer, in the Potteries, who is extremely humane to all his servants and workmen, and gives handsome salaries to those immediately about him. To do so to every workman, would be impossible. It would drive him out of the market, and ruin his manufactory. The general rate of wages depends entirely upon the demand for, and supply of labor. As long as the produce of the workman does not belong to himself, the very work which he does, will tend to diminish the demand for it, and, therefore, to lower his wages. But if, by any means, the working classes could contrive to work for themselves, all the evil of *over production* would immediately vanish, and the workmen would be surrounded by plenty, instead of distress. As long as workmen act singly, they cannot work for themselves; for to do that, they want a *capital*: but if a number of workmen would join together, in Co-operation, they might then save a capital, which, in time, would enable them to work for themselves, upon that capital, as easily as

they now work for a master, upon the capital possessed by the master.

This we believe to be self-evident;—if a master has capital enough to employ an hundred men, and those men, by their work, return that capital with profit—if those men had that capital, as a common property, they certainly could support themselves upon it, as before, till their work was brought to market, and the capital returned with a profit.

Co-OPERATION is a subject entirely for the *working classes*. The *rich* have nothing to do with it. A large class of mankind, are born to *labor*, and expect to labor all their lives. They do not repine at this; they know it is the *will of Providence*, whose ways, although they are dark and unsearchable, are full of *mercy* and *wisdom*. But it is natural for the workman to wish for comforts after his work is done. When he has worked hard for ten or sixteen hours during the day, he ought to have comfortable food, clothing and lodging. We believe this, also, to be the *will of God*, and that He, in due time, will *bring it to pass*.

Let the *working classes*, therefore, consider these things, and lay them to heart. Let those, who cannot see any farther, look to *Co-operation* as a provision for themselves and their families. Let those, who look upon this life in a religious point of view, as a scene that is passing away, and as a passage to another and a better world, carry their religion into Co-operation, as a society of fellow workmen and fellow christians, among whom all the kindly virtues of a christian may be exercised with infinitely more effect than can be under present circumstances. Let them carry the idea of their *Heavenly Father's* presence and care into such a society, and pray for *His Blessing* upon its exertions and conduct, as earnestly as they now do, for such direction and protection over their own families.

“If this work be of men, it will come to nought; but, if it be of God, it will prosper, and cannot be over-turned.”

Co-operative Societies have been established at

36, Red Lion Square, London;
 37, West Street, Brighton;
 10, Queen's Place, Brighton;
 20, Marine Place, Worthing :

Where Works on the subject of Co-operation may be had.

(To be continued.)

THE CO-OPERATOR.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNION ARE POWER :

POWER, DIRECTED BY KNOWLEDGE, IS HAPPINESS :

HAPPINESS IS THE END OF CREATION.

No. 3.

JULY 1, 1828.

1d.

THE VALUE OF LABOUR.

The WORKING CLASSES have no idea of the real value of their own LABOUR. When a man has done a week's work, and received his wages for it, he thinks he has received the whole value of his work : but this is by no means the case. He has not received above one-fourth part of the real value. He has made a bargain with his master, that he will give a week's work for a certain sum of money. Whether this be much or little, it is called, vulgarly, the value of work. But this is merely a common phrase. It is a very indefinite

one, and from long habit, has become confounded in the minds 10 of the WORKING CLASSES, with the WHOLE value of the work done.

If wages were the whole value of the work, how could the master take the work to market, sell it for more money than he gave for it, and grow rich upon the profit, while the workman grows poor upon the wages? This would be impossible. Therefore it is evident that the workman does not get the whole value of his work ; and it is also evident that if he did he would grow rich, just as the master does.

In the days in which we live, many persons have amused themselves with making calculations, about the share which the 20 WORKMAN gets of the produce of his labour. These calculations are very laborious and troublesome to make, and are liable to a great deal of uncertainty and inaccuracy. But they all prove one thing very clearly, viz. that the WAGES which a workman receives, are only a very moderate portion of the value of the work done by him.

We believe that this idea is quite new to the working classes. They think that their wages are the whole value of the work which is done by them. This is their great mistake : and it arises from their IGNORANCE, of which it is the natural consequence. They 30 know nothing, and learn nothing, but how to work hard, and how to spend their wages, in what they call self-enjoyment.

What becomes of the work they have done, the corn they have grown, the manufactures they have made, the houses they have built, they never think about. When they walk about the streets, they never reflect that they built all the houses, all the carriages and waggons, that they see; and made all the clothes and fine dresses that people wear. They imagine, somehow, that the masters who employed them, and paid their wages, made all these things, and that the wages paid to them, were a sort of act of kindness, and liberal generosity: the wages are paid to workmen just as parish allowance is paid to paupers, not because they have a right to them, but because the masters are kind enough to do it, upon some good or religious principle.

All this arises from their IGNORANCE, or want of reflection: from their not asking themselves how it is, that they who do not work grow rich, while those who do work grow poor. If they would only ask themselves this one very simple question, and search about till they find an answer to it, they would discover the secret, and learn how to grow rich, or at least independent, like many of their 50 masters, and like all those who are called the UPPER CLASSES.

It must be so, and could not be otherwise: for all the wealth of the world, that ever did exist, or ever will exist, must necessarily be produced by the WORKING CLASSES, and by them alone. Wealth consists of FOOD, CLOTHES, and HOUSES principally. These, and every thing else, must be made by the workman. They are the works of some individual men. They are not made by masters, nor by men of capital, but by those, and those only, who labour.

It often happens, that a piece of work, for which the workman receives but a few shillings, will last for many years—or if 60 taken care of, for ages. It will be extremely useful to the possessor: it may be absolutely necessary to him, for his pursuits and studies: it may be a means of gaining him a livelihood: it may be a constant source of amusement and happiness to him: and yet the workman who made it, converts the few shillings he received for it, into food, which he consumes in a few hours; and there ends the value and enjoyment of his work. Thus the workman exchanges the happiness of a few hours for the happiness of many years. Can any thing be more absurd than this? Would a workman do this if he were aware of it, if he did not think 70 himself under an absolute necessity of doing it? in short, would he do it, if he did not think, in a very strange way, somehow or other, that he would be really reduced to starvation, unless he exchanged his labour according to this plan?

You say if the workman did not do this he would starve! Who is to starve the workman? The workman is the only person who grows all the food. Cannot he eat the food which he has himself grown? yes, you will say, if his master will let him. But if the workman does not grow the food, will the master grow it. Certainly not: he does not work. If the workman does not grow the food, 80 nobody else will; and all the world must starve—not the workman only, but every body else. How is it then, that when the workman has grown the food, or made a valuable piece of goods, he can scarcely get enough food to support life, or a tolerable stock of domestic comforts? Every body else has plenty. But the man who grew the food, or makes the cloth, or builds the houses, can scarcely get any food, or clothing, or a house to live in!

This is certainly a most extraordinary FACT. People in the present day, are fond of talking about FACTS of all kinds. They hunt about for such as are new or extraordinary, but we may well defy 90 them to find one which is more EXTRAORDINARY than this—"the distress of the working classes." If they were to speak of the distress of the NON-WORKING classes, we should not be surprised:

but it certainly *is* surprising to hear, that the only people who are in distress, are those, and those only, who produce all the food, clothes, and houses, of the world.

Yes, this is a very extraordinary fact. All the NON-WORKING classes have plenty: all the WORKING CLASSES are in distress. You will say, if this be true, it must be the consequence of some great system of injustice in the world. The rich must have tyrannised 100 over the workmen, and reduced them to want, and distress.

We answer, no such thing. How can the rich, who are few in number, tyrannise over the workmen, who are many times more numerous than themselves? This is impossible; that the few should be stronger than the many. The CAUSE of all this must therefore be sought in something else. As it is at present, the workman makes his bargain with his master, and every man, however stupid, knows that "*a bargain is a bargain.*"

Yes, this is a very extraordinary fact. All the NON-WORKING DO NOT WORK FOR THEMSELVES. The workman sells his time, 110 strength, skill, and labour, all his ingenuity, all his cleverness, all his industry, all his health, to his master. If he performed a thousand times as much work as he does, he would be no better off. His master would be the only person benefitted. The greater the quantity of work done, the richer would be the masters and upper classes become; but not a jot richer would the workman be. Indeed the very contrary is proved to be the fact. For the working classes have now, by the aid of machinery, which they have themselves invented, produced such an abundance of food, and all kinds of necessaries, that their labour is no longer wanted.

120 "The market, say the wise ones, is over-stocked with workmen: there are too many poor: too many of the lower orders: too much population. The workmen must be sent out of the kingdom—they are the greatest evil we have to contend against. If we could but get rid of the working classes, we should do very well."

Such are the reflections, which are every day made, upon the present state of things. Which prove completely, that if the workmen were to produce a thousand times as much as they do, they would be no better off: or rather, that the more food, 130 clothes, and houses they produce, the fewer necessaries, comforts and enjoyments they must themselves necessarily possess.

But would this be the case if the working classes WORKED FOR THEMSELVES, and not for others? Most certainly not. They already produce enough for themselves, and all the world besides. Therefore if they worked for themselves alone, they would be supplied most abundantly—not only with the necessaries of life, but with all its luxuries into the bargain.

It is difficult no doubt, to believe that this would be the 140 case: and, supposing that we COULD convince ourselves that plenty of food and comforts would flow in upon the working classes, IF they were to contrive to work for themselves, instead of others: yet, that IF is so great an IF, that it may seem at first sight, ridiculous to expect it, or to indulge the slightest hope that it can ever come to pass.

The workman of the present day, unlike the "bold and virtuous peasantry" of old—"their country's pride," do not

"Jocund drive their team a-field;"

nor when

150 *"The curfew tolls the knell of parting day,"*

do they return to a peaceful cottage, a plentiful table, and an affectionate family of children, who, in grateful return for a

careful education, will support with filial piety the steps of their aged parents; and with the toil of their own hands supply every wish, and satisfy every want: and at last, with decent obsequies, deposit their remains in the silent tomb, purchased and adorned by the fruits of their own honest independence.

On the contrary, the child of modern distress, utters his first cry in the borrowed robes of charity: is indebted perhaps, to a stranger, for that food which ought to make him still longer a part of his mother: then, as soon as he has found his feet, runs the round of courts and alleys: picks up the vice and filth of a crowded city: learns to lie, and tell a hardened tale at the Overseers' Board: forced in due time to earn a part of his pittance, in the close, unhealthy, crowded manufactory, begging the other part weekly, as a charitable boon, or demanding it sulkily, as a legal right: till open, or legal vice makes him in turn a parent, "like father, like son," to transmit his depravity and misery to posterity; a noble theme for the wits of legislators!

Such is too often the picture of modern workmen. Such, in our last number, we shewed was the history of many a family, who were once worthy and knew better days. Their best days have been given to enrich their masters: their worst days remain as a portion for themselves. Nevertheless, let them not despair. Having sought for independence in one direction, and found it not, let them look for it in another. As their masters cannot make them independent, let them look to ONE ANOTHER. Let them consult together. Let them improve their minds. Let them examine the principles of CO-OPERATION. Let them learn to look upon each other as friends—not as foes: as friends, working for one another, and enjoying the whole produce of their labour; not as foes, working against each other, and so giving the greater part of the produce of their labour to their masters.

Our motto is "knowledge and union are power;" that is, that the working classes by uniting with one another in labour, in cultivating, improving and enlightening their minds and hearts by acquiring useful knowledge, and a disposition of friendship towards each other, would obtain the power of making themselves independent: the power of rising above want: the power of commanding all the comforts of life: the power of spending their old age in peace and plenty: the power of bringing up their children in industry, virtue, and religion: and thus, the power of being happy here in TIME, and happy hereafter in ETERNITY.

Societies upon the principle of Co-operation have been established at the following places:—

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 37, West Street, Brighton :
 10, Queen's Place, Brighton :
 20, Marine Place, Worthing :

Where Works on the subject may be had.

To be continued Monthly.

THE CO-OPERATOR.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNION ARE POWER :

POWER, DIRECTED BY KNOWLEDGE, IS HAPPINESS :

HAPPINESS IS THE END OF CREATION.

No. 4.

AUGUST 1, 1828.

1d.

CO-OPERATION CONSIDERED WITH RESPECT TO SUCH CASES AS THAT OF THE KIDDERMINSTER CARPET WEAVERS.

1. We have not yet said enough to explain, clearly, the principles of Co-operation—or to shew in what manner the WORKING CLASSES might begin to form Co-operative Societies. Yet the disagreement which has taken place, at Kidderminster, is so important, and is so sure to be followed by other disputes, between the MASTERS and the WORKING CLASSES, that it may be worth while to take a co-operative view of the question; and to shew that if the STRIKE is to be continued—if the men are to hold out against the masters, and to be supported by a subscription from the different trades, the money so raised, might be applied much more effectually than ever it has been before.

2. Co-operation being a subject quite new to the working classes, it is natural they should be ignorant of it. If it has ever been heard of, by any of them, it has been in such a way as to make it appear completely visionary. It has always been connected with the idea, that in order to carry it into practice, large sums of money are absolutely necessary. The smallest sum ever mentioned, as sufficient for the purpose, is £20,000. From this, the advocates of the system have gradually risen to as much as one million.

3. Such representations do not dispose people even to consider the subject: they rather tend to make them incredulous, and to turn away their heads whenever the subject is alluded to. Yet the great beauty of Co-operation is, that it may be begun without any capital at all. A man wants nothing but his wages, and an honest companion to begin. If they can find a third to join them, they may say, “a three-fold cord is not soon broken.” They may subscribe, weekly, towards a common fund, to provide against sickness, or want of work. They may market for each other. They may buy a large quantity of goods at once, and so get an abatement in price—which abatement they may throw into a common stock. If they are of different trades, they may make domestic articles of comfort for each other, and exchange them. They may do this at odd times, or after work hours.

4. If a number of workmen were to join together, upon these principles, their capital would be greater, and they might do

greater things. They might have a shop of their own, where they might deal, for every thing they wanted. Their shop would enter into competition with other shops, in serving the public. As the business increased, the profits and the capital would increase. As the capital increased, it would employ the members of the Society, in any way which might be deemed most advantageous. If there was a profitable demand in the public, for any particular commodity, the members might manufacture it. If the profits of manufactures were not high enough to make it worth producing them, the members might easily raise their own food, by hiring or purchasing land, and becoming, part of them, agriculturists, instead of manufacturers.

5. These are the simple principles of Co-operation, concisely stated. It is evident from these, that however valuable capital may be, it is not necessary for BEGINNING Co-operation—but that the basis, and secret of Co-operation, is LABOUR. Take away from the produce of LABOUR what is necessary for the comfortable support of the workman—the remainder is profit—which saved, and accumulated, becomes CAPITAL; upon which the workman, and therefore the WORKING CLASSES, might set themselves to work, and produce food and manufactures for themselves and the public, just as well as they do at present upon the capital of their masters.

6. Let us now apply these principles to the case before us—to the Kidderminster Carpet Weavers. They and their masters have quarrelled about the price of wages. Both parties believe themselves right. It is impossible for us to decide between them: but this we know, full well, that if the workmen should carry their point at this time, it would not be long before their wages must fall. The wages of labour generally, are falling, and must continue to fall, and nothing can prevent it. Labour is working against machinery. Those that eat, drink, and get families, are working against those that do not eat, drink, or get families. In such a contest, the eater and drinker must be worsted. He cannot be put in a garret, and kept without food, till he is wanted: he cannot be laid up for the winter. The birth of new labourers cannot be deferred, like the production of new machines, till their labour is called for: they cannot be put together one day, and pulled to pieces another day: they come forth with new faces every day, and still there is a greater troop behind. As the waves that break upon the shore never exhaust the great body of the deep, so the womb of futurity contains more myriads of germs than there are drops of water in the mighty fathomless ocean.

7. It is miserable and affecting to see the laborious, the industrious, the indefatigable, the never-to-be-tired working classes; the skilful, the ingenious, the intelligent mechanics; the Dollands, the Troughtons—those heaven-born geniuses who enabled us to measure the world, the sun, the planets, &c. as accurately as this piece of paper: it is miserable to see them under such uncontrollable circumstances—that they have ruined themselves, and their fellow workmen, by their own wonderful inventions. By selling these inventions to their masters, to work AGAINST themselves, instead of keeping them in their own hands, to work WITH themselves, and so diminish their own labour, they have built an inclined plain for themselves—down which, they must infallibly descend, into the abyss of misery and despair.

8. No subscription which the generosity of the TRADE UNIONS can raise, will do more than *stop up a hole*. It cannot possibly prevent the final catastrophe of the working classes. *It cannot prevent their ultimate ruin*. If it should succeed, supposing that possible, in keeping wages at their present rate, yet this rate is not enough to maintain the workmen in tolerable comfort. The object of the working classes should be, to *improve* their condition: but so

improbable does that appear, and so great is the despair of the people, at the present moment, that probably nothing would be so great a relief to the minds of all men, as a complete conviction that wages had reached their lowest point.

9. Where subscriptions have been made, among the Trade Unions, to support those who strike for wages, the persons who have received them, have generally lived in idleness. No conditions have been made by those who gave the subscriptions, and no return has been made by those who received them. The money has been spent in merely supporting the families of the workmen: nothing has been produced to replace it: it has been entirely wasted.

10. If the workmen had received the same money from their masters, the manufactures made by them, would have reproduced the money with a profit. With this profit, it is, that the master grows rich—and that all the machinery is made. It would be just as easy for the workmen to reproduce this money, by working for themselves, as for the masters. As long as they are supported, no matter by whom, they could make the same carpets, or the same cloth, or the same stockings. Their carpets, cloth, or stockings, could serve the wants of the public, or of their fellow workmen—or of both, just as well as if they had passed through the hands of the masters. The masters do nothing in this respect, but distribute the goods to the public in general. It surely requires no great talent to distribute them. They are never distributed till they are wanted—till they are ordered. A family want a carpet; they go to a shop to buy one: the shopman writes to the manufacturer to send him one: he goes to the warehouse, and executes the order. As long as carpets are wanted, they will be sold. If the Carpet Weavers could have a common capital to work with, they could as well make, and preserve, and distribute carpets, when wanted, as the masters can.

11. So it is with the machines, necessary for making carpets, or any other manufactures: they might as well belong to a few individuals, or to a society, as to one master, or to a society of masters—commonly called a PARTNERSHIP, or FIRM, or COMPANY. There is no more reason against a partnership of workmen, than against a partnership of other people, of non-workmen. The son of a master is put into a counting house, and drilled, and broken in, to habits of business, and carefulness, and saving. These habits, from the idleness of his previous education, are often very hard to learn: but by the authority of his parents, and the necessity of the case, he does learn at last, after some years, to be careful and attentive, and to understand his business. It would be just as easy (and indeed more so) to break in the son of a workman to business, as the son of a master, because the former is brought up in habits of work from his infancy. It would be as easy for workmen as for masters to agree together without quarrelling. Such a society or partnership, would have rules and regulations, just as other partnerships or companies have. Troublesome individuals might easily be expelled from such societies, for infringement of rules, without injuring the other members, just as members of a company are liable to expulsion for breaking the rules.

12. It might be difficult to apply these principles to this particular case of the Kidderminster Carpet Weavers, so as immediately to enable them to work for themselves: but it is evident, that if such societies became common, among the working classes, one might take one manufacture, another might take another—so that they may work into each others' hands. They might supply themselves plentifully with the comforts of life; and through their different shops, they might supply the public—and so obtain a surplus capital, to purchase from other trades, and other countries, what they did not produce themselves.

13. The working classes should begin by having shops of their own. These shops should belong to a small number, who should form themselves into a society for that purpose. They should pay a weekly subscription, to go to form a common fund, just as is now done by Friendly Societies. They should deal as much as possible with their own shops—by which, each society would receive the profit upon the run of the shops, which now goes to shops in general; and by which profit, and by which alone, all the rich shopkeepers in the world grow rich, and make their fortunes. We say it is this profit alone, that maintains the splendour of all the merchants, and companies of the world. The London merchants, the Liverpool merchants, the Bank of England, all make their fortunes out of this profit.

14. Then, if this be so, the working classes have the strongest possible motives for *opening shops for themselves*. The sum of money, which the working classes spend in the course of a year, is enormous. It amounts to many millions. The profit upon this sum, would of itself be sufficient to establish many manufactories. It is not the want of POWER, but the want of KNOWLEDGE, which prevents their setting to work, and making a beginning. Quarrelling with their masters will never give them a capital of their own, upon which alone their independence, or emancipation, or salvation depends: but SHOPPING for THEMSELVES, and WORKING for THEMSELVES, will give them PROFITS, and therefore CAPITAL, and therefore INDEPENDENCE.

15. There are many reasons why we do not expect that the principles of Co-operation can be applied to the case of the Kidderminster Weavers. These principles must be learned like those of other subjects. They must be explained, not by theoretical writers, but by men who have tried them, and found them answer. "One example is worth a thousand precepts." The Society in West Street, Brighton, has answered so well, and is prospering so much, that no one can see it without being convinced of its complete success. The accumulation of its little capital, to some hundred pounds, in a few months, and the mental improvement of its members, are the internal proofs of its SOUND PRINCIPLES. The jealousy which has been expressed against it, by some shopkeepers, is an external proof of the same. Men are only jealous of a rival: and only of that rival when they think he has a good chance of success.

(To be concluded in the next).

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THE CO-OPERATOR.

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No. 5. SEPTEMBER 1, 1828. 1d.

THE KIDDERMINSTER CARPET WEAVERS.

(Continued from No. 4.)

1. Since our last number was written, there has been a meeting in this town for the relief of the Kidderminster Weavers. As we fully believe that Co-operation, in the shape of a Working Union, will infallibly secure the independence of any fifty or hundred workmen, who are sufficiently enlightened to form such a society, so we do not believe that any other plan, or system, or relief whatever, will be of the least advantage to them.

2. It gives us great pleasure, however, to see any signs of that sympathy and goodwill towards each other, which ought ever to pervade the working classes, and which will, when properly directed, lead them to independence. We are only sorry to see their efforts misdirected. The subscription which has already been made, for the Kidderminster Weavers, would have made them an independent body of men, working on their own capital, for themselves exclusively, had they united themselves into one body, made use of the subscriptions as common capital, continued their work as usual, lived in the same economical manner, and laid up the profit to increase the common capital.

3. The same plan would have answered equally well with any set of workmen, in any trade. It has sometimes happened, that workmen have struck for wages, for several months, during which they have done nothing, either for themselves or others: yet they have lived all this time upon an allowance made to them by a committee, entrusted with subscriptions for that purpose. It is strange it should never have occurred to such a committee, to employ the workmen, so supported, in manufacturing their usual articles. These articles might have been sold to the public, through the medium of one of the workmen, acting as agent for the rest. The public would have come to this agent to supply themselves, just as well as they did before to the master manufacturer. They would never have enquired how the goods were made. They would not have supposed that they were made and sold in this manner, in consequence of any quarrel between the men and their masters: and even were such an event known, it would not influence the public as individuals. The public care for nothing but cheapness. Wherever the market is cheapest, there they will go. They will

not enquire, when they go to buy, whether the shop is supported by one individual, or a company; or by a master, or journeyman.

4. If a shop of this kind, belonging to workmen, were established in all the large towns in the kingdom, the manufactures made, by private workmen, on their own account, or by societies of workmen, might be vended to the public, through these shops, and the workman would then get the whole produce of his labour to himself. When disagreements happen, between masters and workmen, and the men are supported for a time, by subscriptions, among their fellow workmen, they might then be manufacturing goods on their own account, and disposing of them through these shops, obtain the whole profit for their own use, and thus be paving the way to their own independence.

5. Unless some plan of this kind be adopted, it does not seem likely that the workmen can ever benefit themselves by disputing with their masters. The causes which determine the rate of wages, are quite beyond the controul of the master, and of the workman. We may hereafter endeavour to explain this, but at present we must take that question for granted. If the rate of wages be independent of both parties, they cannot alter it—and they ought to derive from it, a lesson of practical wisdom; that of mutual kindness and forbearance. We think we could shew that it is no crime in the master to wish to pay as little as possible for wages, nor for the workman to wish to get as much as possible: but it is criminal in either party to endeavour to obtain their end unjustly—and it is folly to attempt it by means which will only aggravate their own misery.

6. We agree perfectly with the workmen, that they ought to cherish a settled determination to better their own condition. We should look at them with unfeigned satisfaction, if we saw them doing so: but we are convinced they will never do it by endeavouring to force their masters into higher wages, by abstaining from work. During such time they must be suffering great hardships themselves: and suppose one or two masters are ruined, this is not the way to provide more work, but rather the contrary, while the probability is more in favor of masters being supplied with workmen from other parts. When new workmen, unknown to the old ones, come to take their places, the situation of the old ones may become very wretched indeed, and no redress can then remain for them.

7. The improvement which has taken place of late years, in the minds of the working classes, by which they have determined on these occasions to abstain from all acts of violence, is most creditable to their moral character, and gives us good reason for hoping they will continue to improve more and more, and at last discover an infallible method of uniting together to secure their own independence. But this quietness is at the moment rather prejudicial to the success of their cause, because it leaves other workmen at liberty to supply the market. If a few individuals are induced by large families, or by peculiar attachments to their masters, to work at low wages, or if new workmen come and accept their wages, because they are higher than what they have been accustomed to elsewhere, it is the greatest possible act of injustice to molest them for so doing. In such cases the workmen begin by demanding justice for themselves, and end by refusing it to others.

8. But if the workmen choose to form working societies among each other, something like the present Friendly Societies, and accumulate a common capital by weekly subscriptions, and invest that capital, first in trade, and next in manufacturing on their own account, so as to work upon their own capital, instead of the capital of a master; no objection can fairly be raised against such a mode of withdrawing themselves from the work of a master, in

order to work for themselves: but if any persons should object to such societies, it would be altogether in vain—for when the working classes are sufficiently enlightened, to form such societies, no power upon earth can prevent them from doing it. This we shall undertake to prove hereafter, and to shew that all the power of the world depends upon the working classes, and the whole amount of the power of any other class consists in guiding the working classes. When they become sensible and convinced of this, they will no longer be so absurd as to part with that power, and suffer other persons to use it to their own detriment. They will, by uniting together, retain that power in their own hands, and thus secure their independence and happiness.

9. If any one had told us, that when a quarrel for wages was taking place at Kidderminster, or any other place, there were a certain number of workmen in London giving money out of their own pockets, to the men out of employ, and standing to them, in the place of masters, we could never have believed it, had we not received the most public proof of the fact. Nor could we have believed that the same thing was done by workmen in other parts of England: for instance, in Brighton, a place where there are no large manufactories; and where disputes of this kind are not likely to occur. We should have said, “the thing is not likely; the workmen are too disunited; they have too little regard for each other; they are too poor; they can get nothing by it; they are too selfish to do any thing without a prospect of gain; and they have not confidence enough in each other to be trusted with money.”

10. Had we reasoned in this way, events shew that we should have been wrong. The working classes, in different parts of England, have a fellow feeling for each other; they have feelings of humanity; they are willing to make sacrifices, in order to relieve each other in distress; however poor they are, they are willing to divide their pittance, even with a stranger, in want of it; and they are capable of doing this upon a system of uniting and combining for that purpose; of receiving small subscriptions from a great number of individuals, and transmitting them to the sufferers; and above all, they can do this with honesty and truth. No one can accuse the working classes of abusing the confidence they repose in each other, or of swindling one another out of money entrusted to them for mutual relief.

11. If then the working classes are capable of doing all these things—of sparing money out of their weekly earnings; of giving it others without any hope of reward; of forming committees of management; and of executing all the duties of trustees with confidence and honor, they possess all the qualities which are necessary for forming Working Unions, and securing their own independence; they possess all the materials but ONE, which is KNOWLEDGE. As soon as ever they acquire enough knowledge to understand a better system, they will begin to act upon it; and then farewell to poverty and distress: farewell to low wages, and disputes with masters: farewell to all anxiety about work, health, and sickness, wife and children, and even about death itself, so far as it affects the comfort and independence of a family.

12. The management of a common capital, and the kind of labour to be engaged in, might at first present some difficulties, but as the capital would accumulate gradually, the difficulties would come one by one; and by being entirely of a practical nature, must certainly be best combated by practical men.

13. As long as the working classes are disunited, and act as single individuals, they will continue to go *down hill*. They will continue to grow poorer and poorer, while all the rest of the world are growing richer and richer. But when they begin to form WORKING

UNIONS, the tables will be turned. The workers, by having the whole produce of their labour to themselves, will begin to grow richer and richer, whatever becomes of the NON-WORKERS.

14. We know that the working classes generally, are not yet ripe for WORKING UNIONS: but we know, at the same time, that there is a sufficient number of RIPE ONES to make a beginning. Fifty members are quite enough to begin a Working Union. They should meet one evening in the week for paying subscriptions, and one evening for conversation, and for acquiring information on the subject and principles of such unions. Their meetings should on no account be held at a public house, but in a room, hired for the purpose. As soon as they open shop, they will find that the profits will easily pay the rent of premises, and the salary of an agent, who must be one of their members, a person who understands the principles, is hearty in the cause, and one who has their confidence. A committee of management must superintend, and audit the accounts regularly. This is the whole mechanism required.

15. The only objection we have ever heard against the practical success of WORKING UNIONS is, that fifty workmen could not work together upon a common capital without quarrelling. This is indeed the only danger. But when we see thousands of workmen uniting, and confiding in each other, every day, subscribing and disposing of large sums of money, without fraud or discontent, we may surely believe, that when united by still stronger principles, they will entertain for each other a sincere friendship, and inviolable fidelity.

16. If these WORKING UNIONS are in the nature of things impossible, we pity most sincerely, from the very heart, our worthy suffering fellow creatures; partakers of the same passions and talents, the same feelings and sensibilities, the same redemption, the same divine nature, and heirs of the same blessed immortality. To them we owe every earthly comfort we enjoy: by the sweat of their brow, all is produced and presented to us. No! our friends! you shall soon understand these simple principles. You shall soon commence working for yourselves. You shall soon lay the foundation stone of your own emancipation: and may God grant you WISDOM in the plan; FIDELITY and CHRISTIAN LOVE in the execution; INDEPENDENCE, PEACE, and HAPPINESS in the glorious RESULT!

Societies upon the principle of Co-operation have been established at the following places:—

- 36, *Red Lion Square, London:*
- 37, *West Street, Brighton:*
- 10, *Queen's Place, Brighton:*
- 20, *Marine Place, Worthing:*
- 2, *Orange Lane, Greenwich:*

Where Works on the subject may be had.

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THE CO-OPERATOR.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNION ARE POWER :

POWER, DIRECTED BY KNOWLEDGE, IS HAPPINESS :

HAPPINESS IS THE END OF CREATION.

No. 6. OCTOBER 1, 1828. 1d.

A CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY; OR WORKING UNION. ITS PRINCIPLES, RULES AND MANNER OF FORMATION.

1. **THE OBJECTS.**—The objects of such a Society are, first, the mutual protection of the members against **POVERTY**: secondly, the attainment of a greater share of the comforts of life: thirdly, the attainment of **INDEPENDENCE** by means of a common capital.

2. **THE MEANS OF OBTAINING THESE OBJECTS.**—These means consist, first in a weekly subscription, of not less than sixpence, to the common capital: and secondly, in employing those subscriptions in a different way from what is usually done—namely, not in investment, but in trade: thirdly, when they have accumulated sufficiently, in manufacturing for the Society: and lastly, when the capital has still farther accumulated, in the purchase of land and living upon it in community.

3. Unfortunately, in the present state of society, the workman can hardly ever attain an independence. As he began, so he must end: still moving his stiffening limbs, and repeating his powerless blows, to receive at the end of six days' toil an unwilling recompense. What he has done through the course of a long life, of early or late toil, is forgotten. The quantity of surplus produce he has created—the thousands he has fed—the houses he has built, are forgotten. The master's eye only compasses the week's produce with the wages: or, perhaps with the man's own produce, when in his prime; and the former vigour of his manhood becomes a reflection upon his declining years.

4. Yet in England some remedy has been attempted for this lamentable state of things. The public have endeavoured to alleviate the distresses of the aged workmen. If they have failed, it is not that they have intended badly, but attempted it by inadequate means. In the end and object we all agree. But in the employment of **MEANS**, each age will use its own: each will contrive according to its degree of knowledge and experience: each will benefit and improve, by extending the wisdom of those that have gone before. Small additions being continually made to the treasures of wisdom, she will at last have sufficient capital for the wants of all her children.

5. **UNION** and **DISUNION** are the two pivots upon which turn the happiness and misery of the world. Disunion is the natural fruit of ignorance and barbarism. Ignorance is the condition of incipient existence: it is therefore, also the condition of men in a rude and uncivilized state. In a barbarous state, men only unite for the purpose of religious worship—or for mutual protection against a common enemy threatening them with destruction. As civilization advances, the necessity of national defence becomes more apparent—the power of government, for that purpose, grows daily stronger—and a general union for this object is forced upon all members of

a state. But this is not a rational deliberate union of individuals for the mutual comfort and independence of each other. This latter kind of union must be among the last results of civilization, improvement and knowledge: and should it ever be established among the working classes, to whom it is peculiarly adapted, it should carry on its front, in golden letters, LET IT BE PERPETUAL.

6. That there is some natural tendency to this Union among the working classes, the rise and progress of different corporations and companies may lead us to suspect. Perhaps, this is a law of nature: if so, it is as irresistible as that of gravity—and will draw all things to it.

7. The unions of corporations and companies have been formed with a view to the accumulation of profits: but the Unions we contemplate are to extend to production. Thus, if the former unions have been successful, when the parties could literally do nothing without the labourer, we ought to expect much greater results from our working Unions, when the members will be masters not merely of a part, but of the whole of the produce of labour.

8. We say that there seems to be a natural tendency in society, as knowledge advances, for men to form themselves into unions. The spirit of union has descended from the higher classes to the lower. These have had their Trade Unions and their Benefit Unions. The latter have met with universal approbation. At first, many of them failed, from being founded upon erroneous principles. As knowledge increased, these principles have been improved, and seem now to be approaching towards perfection.

9. Benefit Unions or Societies accumulate a common capital, by means of Weekly Subscriptions. This common capital is invested in different securities, which yield a small interest, that is, the common capital is lent to some person who employs workmen with it, the produce of whose labour is sufficient to pay the interest, and yield him an ample profit besides.

10. This mode of investing a common capital is mere ignorance in the working classes. They might as well employ themselves upon this capital as lend it to another to employ them upon it; in the one case they would get the whole of the produce, in the other only that small part which is called interest.

11. Hence a Working Union, having the same object as a Benefit Union—namely, comfort and independence—endeavours to obtain that object by different means. The minds of the members are more enlightened, and therefore their means are more enlightened. Their knowledge is farther advanced, and they accordingly use more intelligent measures: they see that the old methods do not succeed sufficiently—they therefore search for new ones.

12. This is precisely the question. The working classes see that they are wrong: they see that they produce all the wealth of the world, and they wonder how it is that it escapes from their hands; they see that Benefit Unions only succeed partially; they see that the capital is badly employed, but they do not see how to employ it better.

13. This secret has at last been discovered. The Society in West Street, Brighton, have made this discovery, and are now reaping the fruits of it; they began by investing their subscriptions, not in the Funds or Savings' Bank, but in Trade; they purchased those articles which were daily wanted and consumed by the members; they bought for ready money, and sold for ready money—they therefore ran no risk either way. Whatever the profit be, whether much or little, the Society receives it. As often as the capital is turned round, so often the profit returns. What this profit is, has hitherto been a profound secret to the working classes; it is so no longer—they know it and they keep it for themselves. It appears by their books, that the sums of money, which if they had been invested at interest in the usual way, would have yielded a profit of about *four* pounds, have, by being invested in trade, yielded them a profit of about *thirty*.

14. This is the first step in a Working Union, and it is the most difficult one. Working men have no idea of employing money in trade; they think it is a distinct occupation, which belongs to others: they almost fancy that they could not exist a day without a shop to go to, to buy food; though they produce the food, and carry it to the shop, yet they fancy they could not eat it without it went through the shopman's hands—so it is with every other article of production. Workmen have no idea that a certain number joining together with a small capital to begin with, could produce and consume among themselves, independent of the rest of the world.

15. The Union then will begin with a shop; to manage this shop they must have an agent; this agent must be a member—he will be chosen by the Society—he will keep regular accounts, as is done in all business. Three other members will be appointed as trustees, to receive the weekly subscriptions, to superintend the agent, and to audit his accounts; this will be done weekly, that all may know the state of the Society; and the trustees being changed occasionally, all will become acquainted with the mode of transacting business.

16. At first, as the capital of the Society will be small, the shop will not be able to supply the members with all the articles of consumption they may want. As the capital increases this will be done more perfectly. But as the wants of the members are limited, there will be a time when capital will exceed what the shop requires. This will happen in less than one year after the Society is formed, even though the weekly subscriptions should be as low as three-pence. When this period arrives, the Society will ask themselves this question—What shall we do with our surplus capital? The answer will be—employ one of your own members to manufacture shoes, or clothes, &c. &c. for the rest; pay him the usual wages, and give the profits to the common capital. In this way they will proceed, as the capital increases, to employ one member after another, either to manufacture articles consumed by the members, or by the public. Beginning to manufacture for the members, the sale is sure. When the capital is able to produce more goods than the members can consume, they must manufacture those articles which are in demand by the public at large.

17. We need not follow these operations of the Society any farther. It is evident that when the capital has increased thus far, it will continue to increase: that it will, by degrees, employ all the members: that they may then follow those employments which are most lucrative—and be for ever independent of poverty. If any one should think it impossible for such a Society to carry on business profitably, they have only to go to West Street and satisfy themselves. If the working classes cannot understand it on paper, let them go there and see it with their eyes.

18. QUALIFICATIONS OF MEMBERS.—The members of such a Society should be carefully chosen.

I. They should be all of the working class. The reason of this rule is—first, that labour is the only source of wealth: and capital is of no use till it is converted, by labour, into the comforts and luxuries of life. Secondly, in the present state of society, the different classes do not easily amalgamate: they are jealous of each other. The higher person is apt to look down upon the lower with some degree of contempt, and cannot bear to converse with him as an equal.

II. The members should all be good and skilful workmen—able to earn a certain sum per week, to be settled by the rules: the most useful trades should be chosen; and there should not be too many of the same trade.

III. They should be persons of good character—industrious, sober, steady and quiet.

IV. They should not be ignorant and prejudiced persons, but as well informed as their rank in life admits of, and desirous of adding

to their knowledge and improving their minds, as far as their circumstances and opportunities allow.

V. They should be of good general health; not liable to constitutional disorders.

VI. They should be of a certain age, perhaps between eighteen and thirty-five. If too old, they may become superannuated, before the Society can receive the fruits of their labour. This is a rule in all Benefit Societies.

VII. It is necessary that the wife of a proposed member should approve of the Society, and understand something of its principles. otherwise the husband cannot be hearty in the cause—and he will be liable to interrupt the harmony of the Society.

VIII. Persons of too large families should not be admitted, because, in the infancy of the Society, too many unproductive members might become a serious evil.

IX. In order to preserve the common capital untouched, and to obtain immediately all the advantages of the common Benefit Societies, whenever a member is disabled from work by sickness, or dies, or loses his wife, a subscription should be entered into by the members for the sufferer. If a member is thrown out of work, and it appears not to be his own fault, he should be assisted till he finds work, either in the same place or some other. This rule would give the Working Union a decided advantage over the Benefit Union, for in the latter, if a member be out of work, and neglect paying his subscriptions, he is struck off the list.

X. If the premises of the Society do not afford accommodation for the Society to meet, the expenses of a proper room should be paid by a quarterly subscription.

XI. The Society should meet in their own room once a-week, for the mutual instruction and improvement of the members in the principles of such Unions. The subject of the evening's conversation should be given out at the preceding meeting. Books on the subject may be read, and their arguments considered. One member should preside as chairman, and the office should be filled by rotation.

XII. On the other evenings of the week, those members who have leisure, should meet at the room and form themselves into classes, for mutual instruction. As the societies will consider labour to be the source of all wealth, and therefore be called Working Unions, so they will perceive that labour must be directed by KNOWLEDGE, and therefore they will acquire all the useful knowledge they possibly can.

XIII. Agreeably to this principle, they will begin to pay particular attention to the education of their children. They should select the best school the neighbourhood affords; and agree to send their children to the same, on condition that the members of the society may visit the school and notice the progress of the children. But a still more desirable plan would be, to have a school of their own, and employ a master, at a salary.

XIV. This school should combine learning with industry, that the children should not acquire either pride or laziness, but habits of active carefulness.

XV. Thus the principles of a Working Union or Co-operative Society, go as far as those of a Benefit Society, by providing for the members in sickness and old age. They go farther, by ensuring to the members constant employment out of their own capital; and they introduce a new principle among the working classes, that of the improvement of their mental and moral character.

XVI. It remains for our readers to consider, whether such Societies are likely to diminish PAUPERISM and CRIME, and to add to the HAPPINESS of mankind.

C. & R. Sickelmore, Printers, Brighton.

THE CO-OPERATOR.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNION ARE POWER :

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HAPPINESS IS THE END OF CREATION.

No. 7. NOVEMBER 1, 1828. 1d.

THE SPIRIT OF CO-OPERATION.

“Sirs, ye are Brethren.”

1. Of all the relations of life there is none more endearing than that of a brother. In sickness and health; in joy and sorrow; in prosperity and adversity, this relationship is a balm for every wound. A family is the place where we are to look for the purest and happiest feelings which man is permitted to enjoy upon earth. A family is a community as far as it goes. All are fed from the same stock. All sit at the same table, and drink of the same cup. All have a common lot, either of prosperity or adversity. All hold the same rank in society. If one should happen to be more fortunate than the rest in the world, and rise to wealth or honour, he imparts a portion of his prosperity to the others. He soothes the old age of his parents: or he makes them happy by his public honours, and by his kind and filial attentions to their wishes. He lends his hand to those who are of his own age, and helps them on their journey: or he superintends, directs, and patronizes those who are younger than himself, in their studies, their pursuits, and professions. Thus, by a feeling of grateful and laudable ambition, he becomes the father of his household; and every one, at his approach, “rises up and calls him blessed.”

2. This family affection ought to extend itself from private to public life; from the family to the world. It ought to be the model upon which every one should endeavour to form his own character. The reward of such a character is sweet in the extreme. It exists in the sympathy of every bosom: it makes a family of the world: it sees a brother in every human being, and rejoices in every opportunity of doing him good.

3. Man was evidently intended to be brought to this lovely state by nature and by providence—and in our apprehension those terms are synonymous. Man was never intended to live by the misery or ruin of his neighbour—but by his prosperity and happiness. That portion of evil which unavoidably befalls some people in the present state of the world, was intended to be mitigated, if not obviated by the general prosperity and happiness. As one individual bears but a trifling proportion to the whole race, so the misfortunes or unhappiness of one may be abundantly compensated by the overwhelming prosperity of the great mass of mankind.

4. “There is a friend,” says the wise man, “that sticketh faster than a brother!” However strong the affection and interest of a family may be, man is so formed as to contract indissoluble attachments to some one or more of his fellow creatures. Two minds may have the same pursuits and studies—the same views and objects—they may delight in the same species of knowledge—and may join together in the same career of improvement and science. The common object may be sufficient to bind them together in friendship; and they may follow the common pursuit with double ardour and double relish.

5. But the sweetest of all bonds is that which is formed not merely by a common science, but by a congenial disposition and heart. It is from the heart that every valuable feeling springs, and every source of pleasure and happiness. No kind of pursuit, or knowledge, becomes a source of happiness to a man, till it takes fast hold of the heart and affections. When we love a science, then we appreciate its value and its beauties. They grow and expand every day, and the more we examine them, the more inexhaustible do we find them. We see that the objects of our love are infinite—our hearts dilate with a feeling of the same infinity—we ourselves experience a kind of growth within us—our very nature seems to change, to enlarge, to purify, to be exalted—and we are led continually to wonder at the vast and improving character of the powers and faculties we possess.

6. This feeling of friendship is so peculiar and delightful, that it has been the subject of some of the most beautiful compositions which have ever been written. This however is not of so much importance in our view, as the fact that friendship of some kind and in some degree, is absolutely necessary to every man's comfort in the common intercourse of life. No man would wish to say, and no man can say, that he has not a friend in the world. It is considered a most forlorn estate for a man not to know to whom to turn for an act of kindness: and when we meet with so extreme a case, we instantly forget all the common forms of society, and of rank; and by an instinctive impulse, we become that friend ourselves, as if to prevent the world from being loaded with the disgrace of bearing on its face a friendless man.

7. It is oppressive to contemplate the picture of man, in this state, approaching to friendless destitution. The heart mourns over it, and seeks relief in imagining the possibility of a state of things, in which we may extend the delightful feeling of friendship from one to many—in which we may open our bosom, and receive into our arms, all who wear the fair form and features of man. Such is the state which Co-operation holds out, and Co-operation alone. Co-operation removes the almost insurmountable obstacles to friendship, namely—self-interest, rivalry, jealousy, and envy. When two persons have an inclination to cultivate a friendship for each other, they seldom proceed far without finding their interests clash. The delicate feelings of mutual esteem, which at first is small and weak, and requires time for its growth, and a variety of kind offices for its strength, receives a check in its very outset. Mutual suspicions and jealousies arise; and the tender plant is nipped in the bud. Men must have different pursuits, and be wholly independent of each other, in order to stand any chance of a real and sincere friendship.

8. But if persons were so situated, that their interests were, in all respects, the same—if the prosperity of the one ensured the prosperity of the other—and the happiness of the one, the happiness of the other—then, instead of suspicion and jealousy, they could only feel towards each other, love, esteem, and affection. If one were cleverer than another, or more indefatigable—if he had more genius, knowledge, or energy than another—or were more zealous, industrious, and persevering than another, while that other reaped an equal share of all this superiority—surely that other could not but entertain for his kind friend, a high degree of respect, esteem, and admiration, in proportion to his superior merits. The weak is now beaten down by the strong—the ignorant man by the man of genius: but were they to find in the strength and wisdom of others, their own protection and safeguard, they would feel no longer unhappy and discontented in their own moderate powers, while they would look, with pleasure and approbation, on the greater powers of their neighbour.

9. Such is the state of things, which Co-operation holds out.

Every man, on entering such a Society, immediately becomes surrounded by a host of friends. All the abilities and labour of all those friends are pledged to him, to protect him against the common evils of life, and to ensure to him its comforts and enjoyments. While he presents the Society with the labour, skill, and knowledge of one single individual, the Society presents him with those of many. He gives little: he receives much. In himself, he is subject to all the uncertainties, the ups and downs of life, to anxiety and care, to laborious days, and sleepless nights: but in the Society, he has insured himself against all these things: he cannot be ruined unless the Society be so too: and the ruin of a Society of labourers is an impossibility. Because, as every labourer produces about four times as much as he consumes, a society of one hundred labourers must produce four hundred times more than they consume—which is amply sufficient to provide against all the chances and accidents of life.

10. Suppose a workman, a member of such a Society, to form a friendship for another member, how delightful would it be for them to live under the same roof, to work at the same employment, to eat at the same table, to spend the hours of rest and recreation in mutual conversation or improvement. They would never be separated by change of masters, want of work, or sickness, or old age. One would never look down upon the other because he was rising more in the world, nor feel contempt for him as belonging to a different trade. They would continually be striving to oblige each other, by little acts of kindness and attention. They would lighten each other's labour as opportunity offered, and they would unite in this labour with the greatest cordiality and zeal, in order to insure a common independence.

11. Another pleasing occupation of such friendship would be, to assist in explaining and enforcing the great principles of the Society: to instruct the ignorant: to encourage the timid: to help the weak: to be patterns to the other members: to be foremost in exertion, in zeal, in activity: to be always ready to meet difficulties, and to bear the heat and burthen of the day. Such objects would be worthy of the warmest friendship, and the highest energies: and would be a fit employment for those exalted faculties which God has given to man.

12. We do not mean to assert that each member of a society or community would possess that high degree of feeling, which is called friendship, towards every other member. We only argue upon the general truth, that friendship, in some degree, is common and necessary to all men—that the circumstances of ordinary life are very unfavourable to it—and that those of a Co-operative community are essentially favourable: and when such friendship does exist, between two or more members, their circumstances will enable them to reap from it the highest possible enjoyment.

13. But this friendly feeling, among the members generally, must not be left to chance and accident. It must not only be recommended as an advantage; it must be enforced as an imperative and paramount duty and obligation. When a man enters a Co-operative Society, he enters upon a new relation with his fellow men; and that relation immediately becomes the subject of every sanction, both moral and religious. Mutual regard, friendship and affection become then as binding upon a member as the duties of common honesty and sobriety. Religion will step in here, as into other relations, and will hold forth her promises of future reward and punishment, in proportion as men are good or bad members of the community to which they belong. Zeal, energy, and fidelity, will draw after them the glorious rewards of a future life: whilst indolence, indifference, and unfaithfulness, will naturally anticipate the gloomy sentence of disapprobation and punishment. Though the profession of a common creed will not be one of the objects of

a community, yet every member will be glad to unite in that view of religion which will give additional force and sanction to all their regulations for the common good.

14. However, we cannot withhold our opinion that the delightful feelings of friendship will pervade the whole Society to a considerable extent. The common yearnings of our nature, and the common ties of the Society will necessarily open the hearts of the members. No man will be admitted whose general character is not approved of—so that no obstacle will exist to thwart his inclination to contract friendships among the members. While nothing opposes them, many things will favour them; and when many rivers run in one direction, without opposing currents, they must at last unite in one common ocean.

15. The common capital is the great bond of union. Each member is nothing in his individual capacity—but every thing in his social capacity. If he separates himself from the Society and the common capital, he is ruined. While he is united with them his fortune is made. The importance of each member, and the value of his labour, as a single individual, are nothing: so small is the proportion they bear to the whole Society, and the common capital. The older the Society grows, and the larger the capital, the more insignificant is each member as an individual. These and similar reflections, must make him look to the Society and its common capital, so as to entertain for them the utmost regard and love.

16. But if a number of persons are continually admiring and loving the same object—if that object possesses many beauties and excellencies—if it be the great and unfailing source of their happiness, they must necessarily, by continually loving the same interesting object, draw towards each other in the bonds of love. It would be the height of absurdity to suppose that mankind should be prone, even to a fault, to a common sympathy, under the present course of things—and dead to this sympathy, when united in a common society, with a common capital. It is much more reasonable to suppose and to prophecy, that this sympathy would act in Co-operation, with new energies, and rise occasionally, even to enthusiasm. If men are now to be found, so full of public spirit, as to sacrifice their ease and peace, their prosperity and happiness, and even life itself, for the public good, when the reward is but an empty name, or a monument when they are no longer sensible of the honor, or perhaps the mistaken execration of an ungrateful world—what efforts will they not be capable of, when, to the certainty of posthumous fame, is added the present prosperity and happiness of all around them!

17. Yes! enough has now been done to justify us in anticipating the happiest results: and we are convinced that our motto, "Sirs, ye are brethren," will be the talisman which every Co-operator will wear next his heart. It will be the rosary on which every member will tell his morning and evening aspirations, to the great fountain of all love—to impart the principles more and more widely and deeply to his own breast, and to those of his friends and brethren. The spirit of Co-operation is the spirit of friendship and brotherly love, which, though small at first in the infancy of the Society, will gather strength and stature as it goes—will at length lift its head sublimely to the skies, and enfold in its parental and everlasting embrace, all the children of the happy community.

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SICELMORE, TYP. BRIGHTON.

THE CO-OPERATOR.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNION ARE POWER :
POWER, DIRECTED BY KNOWLEDGE, IS HAPPINESS :
HAPPINESS IS THE END OF CREATION.

No. 8. DECEMBER 1, 1828. 1d.

THE THREE ESSENTIALS OF CO-OPERATION, VIZ., LABOUR, CAPITAL, KNOWLEDGE.

LABOUR.

1. In order to shew that a Co-operative Society must necessarily obtain a state of independence for all its members, it is sufficient to shew that it contains within itself the common basis upon which all the independence of the world is founded. This is labour. Labour is the root of the tree whatever size it may ultimately grow to. Labour is in this sense every thing: therefore he who has labour has every thing.

2 No man will be senseless enough to deny that the working classes possess this labour within themselves. They are the only people who do possess it. They have the monopoly of this article most completely in their own hands. Nor can any law or force deprive them of it: for all force is a species of labour, and resides in the working classes, and in them alone: and the power of any person, or class of men, is nothing more than the power of directing the labour or power of the working classes.

3. We wish to direct the attention of the working classes to this point, that they may employ the power they and they alone possess for their own advantage, instead of the advantage of others. Till they do that, the command which individuals now possess of directing labour and living upon it, must continue to stand in the place of co-operation. As the working classes are the only persons who labour, they may choose at any time whether they will labour for themselves or for others.

4. Labour is the basis and corner stone of the building—the key stone of the arch—the root of the tree—the perennial spring of the mighty river—the heart of the body—the essence of life. If the working classes possess this labour they ought to possess the building, the arch, the tree, the river, the body, and the life itself. But they do possess this labour, therefore the moment they enter into co-operation they must succeed.

CAPITAL.

5. The working classes possess labour; no man can deny it; no man does deny it. This seems a most extraordinary circumstance

that a labourer should have no power over his own labour. So it is, and we are free to confess it. Whether it will for ever remain so, remains to be seen. The reason is very simple, plain and obvious. The workman has no Capital. While he is working it is necessary he should eat and drink. He wants food, clothing and lodging, to support himself while he is producing fresh food, clothing and lodging. This may be called in a general sense Capital. This definition of Capital is intelligible enough for our purpose. While a man is working, he wants capital to live upon till his work is done. Whoever possesses this capital will command labour. The workman has not this capital, therefore he must sell his labour to him who has.

6. But though the workman does not possess the capital he might easily do so. All capital is made out of labour. Capital is nothing but the produce of labour saved up: therefore whoever possesses labour might possess capital also if he pleased. He has only to lay by a portion of the produce of his labour till he has enough to live upon of his own, while he is working to make fresh produce: then he would have capital and the command of his own labour. A man who works for another is a servant. If a servant saves up enough capital to support himself while he is at work, he becomes his own master. If he saves up more, so as to be able to command the labour of another, he becomes a master to others. As all capital is made out of labour, so all masters are made, or were once made out of workmen.

7. It is evident that all men cannot be masters: the meaning of which is only this—that the world cannot do without labourers: and the meaning of this is—that capital is of no use without labour. This is a very important consideration that capital is nothing in itself. People talk as if capital were every thing; by which they mean only that the command of labour is every thing. But if there were no labourers, there would be no commanding them, and then the capital would be nothing. So that in this view of the question also, labour and not mere capital is every thing. Labour must be united with capital to make capital productive.

8. They say, "all men cannot be masters," which is very true, if by a master is meant a man who does not work: but if by a master were meant a man working on his own capital, then all men might be masters if they pleased, without any injury to the world, and even with great advantage. All a man wants is capital, to support himself while he is at work. It matters not whether the capital belongs to himself or another, as far as that support goes. While he is consuming his capital, he is, by his labour, continually reproducing it. By the same process of saving, by which he accumulated a capital, he can be constantly enlarging it: so that he might have his choice, either to enlarge his capital or diminish his labour.

9. The importance of not separating capital from labour is very great, though hitherto they have been considered as distinct things: and so far has this distinction been carried, that labour and capital are thought to be incompatible, than which a more absurd proposition cannot be entertained. If capital is made out of labour, as every body allows, so far from there being any opposition between them, there ought to be a natural alliance: and so there is, but the working classes are too ignorant to perceive it.

10. We say it is important not to separate labour from capital: the reason is, that the labourer is immediately degraded in body and mind. He loses *caste*: he loses his character and respectability. He is branded as one of the *swinish multitude*: the *dregs of the people*—the *populace*: the *scum of the earth*. All the insulting epithets of a language are heaped upon the poor workman. This all arises from separating labour from capital. The long catalogue

of public crimes is mostly committed by persons of the labouring class—that is, the reward of labour becoming necessarily less and less, when labour is separated from capital, the degraded man finds it frequently easier to live by crime than by work. His mind becomes uncultivated for want of leisure; his moral ideas degraded; his moral nature demoralized: he descends in the scale of humanity till he approaches to the brute; he is valued, bought and sold as a brute, by a legal sale; and is proved in the opinion of some of his fellow men to be nothing but a particular species of brute.

11. Labour and capital have been long divided, but it was not always so. There was a time when it was thought no degradation in the Statesman, the General, the Sovereign, to hold the plough: nay, the greatest men the world ever produced, or ever will produce, have dignified and consecrated labour: the most delicate hands have followed it. Read, read, read, the history of the world, sacred and profane. It was reserved for this civilized and christian age to discover that labour is disgraceful and the labourer not worthy of his hire—and that all attempts to improve his mind and condition are inexpedient and dangerous.

12. The working classes possess the labour, the source of all capital; let them then endeavour to unite again labour and capital: then indeed they will be independent and happy as their forefathers were. We are of opinion that this may be done, but not single handed. "A kingdom divided against itself must fall." Workmen working against one another are divided amongst themselves, and must be ruined. Workmen united together must be independent. Let them save, and save, and save, to form a common capital. Let this capital be their master. He will never chide them, nor grind them down, nor turn them adrift upon the wide world: on the contrary, he will cherish and protect them, he will make them independent of all but himself, he will be to them as a father, and will literally "never leave them nor forsake them."

KNOWLEDGE.

13. Many circumstances have occurred within the last year, nay within the last few months, to shew that the working classes are approaching towards the knowledge and practice of co-operation. The great obstacle in the way of co-operation is the ignorance of the working classes. This ignorance is fast dissipating. Knowledge in general has accumulated among men of science and the upper classes, to such an extent, that it has necessarily spread to the workman. The complicated relations of society compel every man, however low his rank, to acquire some portion of knowledge. A workman or servant cannot fill his situation without reading and writing. The power of reading is followed by the use of it. The reading of absurd and useless trash gradually gives way to a taste for something useful and improving, and even books of science have reached the hands and are comprehended by the minds of the working classes. No man ever lost the love of knowledge when once acquired, neither will the working classes undervalue that which will assuredly lead them to independence. As their knowledge increases, they will know the principles of co-operation, and to know them is to ensure their being acted upon.

14. This knowledge, those of the working classes who begin to understand co-operation, will endeavour to acquire as far as their leisure permits. It will be one of their first principles, because they will perceive that it is only ignorance which leaves a man to do so foolish a thing as to work for another instead of himself; and that it is only knowledge which enables a man of capital to live without work. As all the capital of the whole world has been produced by the working classes, so they will now set to work to produce a fresh

capital for themselves. This they will be able to do very rapidly when they once begin, by the aid of those wonderful inventions and machines for abridging labour, which are now in existence. The workmen made these machines for others, they can therefore surely make them for themselves. This they will most certainly do.

15. By the help of this machinery their labour will be abridged, and they will have still more leisure for the acquisition of knowledge. Their minds are as capable of acquiring knowledge as those of other people. Almost all men of science have risen out of workmen. They only want leisure and opportunity. Capital will give them both, and labour will give them capital: therefore they have every thing in their own hands—labour, capital and knowledge, and therefore independence, virtue and happiness.



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THE CO-OPERATOR.

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No. 9.

JANUARY 1, 1829.

1d.

MACHINERY.

1. A machine is any contrivance for diminishing labour, or for obtaining a greater power than mere human strength is able to produce. It is of no consequence how small the quantity of labour is which is saved, or the quantity of new power which is obtained : still the contrivance, or instrument by which it is done, is a machine. If a man wanted to move a heavy weight, and used a branch of a tree to do it, this would be a machine. If a man were attacked by a wild beast, and destroyed the animal by a stone, this would be a machine. If instead of throwing a stone with the hand, he projected it from a tube, by means of gunpowder, he would only use a more powerful machine. By means of gunpowder, and an iron tube, he has obtained an entirely new power, and one which all the force of unassisted human strength cannot equal.

2. In some parts of the world man is so ignorant, and therefore so miserable, that he wanders on the sea shore to put stones and sticks into the open shellfish, that he may at his leisure more readily extract the fish for his food. These stones and sticks are the machines of the savage. Those who object to machinery should object to these, because more men would be employed if the shells were opened by the unassisted hands. We may add also, that more men would be starved.

3. The folly of saying that a savage would be better off without machines for self-defence, or for supplying himself with food, would be too great for any man to be guilty of : yet many maintain that position in fact, by complaining of the progress of machinery. It would be difficult to persuade the savage that he had better not use the bow and arrow to kill his food, yet a great deal of invention is necessary even for this simple machine. But food obtained by hunting soon perishes, and accordingly those who first discovered food of a more durable quality, and invented machines for cultivating and preparing it, were esteemed the benefactors of their race.

4. But clothing is as necessary as food to the comfort of man, and any covering is preferable to none. The change from the more simple to the more complicated kind implied in it the praise of the inventor. The discovery of the art of spinning thread, and weaving it into cloth, seems like a new era in the history of man ; and we might say at once, of a being capable of such wonderful contrivances, "his race is worthy to endure for ever ; his inventions shall

never cease; his land shall overflow with milk and honey; and in some future age his earth shall be as full of plenty and happiness as the sea is full of water."

5. One part of such a prophecy is come to pass, and we have to contemplate the effect of it. On the one hand the land we inhabit is full of machinery, full of food, full of clothing; on the other hand the people who made this machinery, food and clothing, are not rich, prosperous and happy; but on the contrary, poor, miserable, famished and starving.

6. While machines were simple, and such as single persons might use, domestic manufactures supplied domestic wants, and the value of the machine was evident without any disadvantage. But human invention cannot be limited, and the same wonderful nature which was able to invent simple machines was able afterwards to invent more complicated ones, and ones of greater power. First a machine was invented to do the work of one man; then of several men; then of some hundreds of men; lastly of some thousands of men. There are at this moment, in England, hundreds of machines, each of which is doing the work of some thousands of men.

7. But this is not all, for the work of these machines is not merely more than could be done by thousands of men, it is altogether a new power. A man at work, with a machine to help him, is no more like a man, without a machine, than he is like another animal. He is a different being. His desires, thoughts, wishes, pursuits and powers are totally different. Two such men agree in little more than in external shape.

8. Machine follows machine, and invention follows invention, and there is no end to the one or the other. Looking at the history of machines and inventions, we may almost conclude that they are still in their infancy. If then the machine which I work produces as much as a thousand men, I ought to enjoy the produce of a thousand men. But no such thing. I am working a machine which I know will starve me. The machine does not work for me: nor do I work for myself. I direct the machine, and it makes food or clothing in abundance: but scarce a morsel comes to me. I must go and beg my bread at the hand of charity. I have no right to the produce of the machine. I shall make so much food or clothing to-day, that to-morrow my master will turn me into the street. To-day I shall make more food or clothing than my master and all his customers together can consume, for a long while to come, though many of them live on the other side of the globe. To-morrow my master will not want me, for a long while to come, and will tell me to go to the parish, and the parish will tell me to go and work. I shall be driven from my master to the parish; from the parish to my master; from pillar to post; from post to pillar. And all this because I have made more food and clothing than all the world can consume.

9. This is the present state of England with respect to machinery. The wonderful nature of the human mind sets no limit to invention. The quantity of work done by machines is so great, the number of hands required to work for them so small, that the number of workmen wanted is continually diminishing, while, from the laws of population, the number existing is continually increasing, so that the poverty and misery of the workmen are continually increasing, and under the present system of managing machinery their starvation seems inevitable.

10. Nothing would have prevented the actual starvation of the men who work the machines but the humane provision of the poor laws. Whatever other evils may have resulted from the poor laws they have prevented the actual starvation of the manufacturing workmen. It is to be hoped that they will continue to palliate the

enormous evils under which the working classes at present groan, till they themselves have discovered the grand remedy. This remedy is co-operation, and co-operation only: the co-operation of workmen.

11. There are two things in a machine which it is necessary to consider and distinguish, because upon them depends the whole question between machinery and the working classes, and whether these inventions are an injury or not. The first is the quantity of work done by the machine; the other is the person or persons for whom that work is done—the persons who are to have that work when it is done. As to the quantity of work done, we know well enough that it is so abundant that it cannot be consumed. All the markets of all the world are overstocked. Those who are to consume the goods have more goods than they can consume. This is precisely the evil complained of. This shews to a demonstration the incalculable power of machinery—that it will produce more than the world can possibly consume. And as there is no limit to the number of machines that might be made, so there can be none to the produce that might be made.

12. It is the other point which is so very important to be considered—namely, the persons for whom the machines work. And here it is evident that the machines do not work for the workmen. The workmen do not get the produce of the machines. A few workmen now supply the world with produce: and they themselves are starving. If they had the produce of the machines they would have an abundance—the same abundance that is now in the world. Machinery is in itself no evil; on the contrary, it is a very great good to those who get the produce: one of the greatest goods which Providence has ever bestowed upon man: but it is only good to those who get the produce. It is no good to those who do not get the produce: and in proportion as it is an incalculable good to those for whom it works, it is an incalculable evil to those against whom it works. It is either the greatest friend or the greatest foe which a man has.

13. At present machinery works against the poor workman, and therefore it must be his deadliest enemy: and if the workmen do not contrive to make friends with machinery they must be starved, in spite of the poor laws. The workmen are so well aware of this, that they have made many attempts to destroy machinery altogether. This can hardly be wondered at. The necessity to which the workmen are driven is so piercing, that they must continually return to this expedient. The only thing which has prevented this being done, to a greater extent than hitherto, is the spread of knowledge among the workmen, by which they are able to see both the folly and criminality of such an act; folly, because it could not be done effectually, and if done, the machines would be replaced: criminality, because property is a sacred thing—and to injure it in any way is the greatest violation of all law, human and divine.

14. The folly of such a step would also be great on this account—that there is a much easier way for the workman to be revenged on machinery: it is by making it work twice as much for himself as it has ever done for the rest of the world. The remedy is so simple that it is surprising it has not been found out. The workmen have ingenuity enough to make all the machinery of the world, but they have not yet had ingenuity enough to make it work for themselves. That ingenuity will not be dormant much longer; for as soon as the success of the West Street Society is generally known, among workmen, they will as naturally adopt its plan as they have adopted the system of Benefit Societies. In all these subjects the world is carried on by a natural and irresistible course of events, of which Providence is the head and director. Nothing happens by chance, but every thing happens because it was intended by Providence.

Many great improvements have already taken place in the condition of the working classes, but this machinery business has puzzled everybody. However let us await the issue. If it end by driving the working classes into co-operation, in mere self-defence, then their destiny will be accomplished, and will happen in consequence of an irresistible law of Providence.

15. When a society of a hundred members has accumulated a common capital, sufficient to employ all the members, so that they shall obtain the whole produce of their labour for themselves, a farther accumulation of capital will enable them to purchase, or to make some of these wonderful machines, which, worked by a few hands, will make clothing enough for thousands of people. Then will the workman be able to shed tears of joy instead of sorrow over his machine : and the men who invented and made the machines will again be honored as the benefactors of mankind. The workman will rise from the state of starvation and misery, in which he now lives, into one of plenty and happiness. Instead of sixteen hours' work, and eight hours' rest, (see Co-operator, No. 2, page 2) he may, when his machinery works all for him, have eight hours' work, and sixteen for rest and mental improvement. He will work in healthy and airy apartments : he will have regular exercise and amusement in the open air : he will be well fed and clothed : his body will become strong, active and healthy : he will have time to improve his mind, and to acquire that knowledge which will make him a still more skilful workman, and a better member of society : and when he looks abroad upon the face of nature, and sees the blessings by which he is surrounded, his heart will swell with gratitude to the Being who made him, while he exclaims, " Thank God I am a man."



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No. 10. FEBRUARY 1, 1829. 1d.

LEEDS CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY.

(From the Weekly Free Press of the 27th of December, 1828.)

A meeting of the Benefit Societies in Leeds was held in that town last week, to take into consideration the propriety of forming a Co-operative Trading Fund Association, upon the principle of the Trading Unions, recently advertised in the Weekly Free Press.

Mr. Carson, from Birmingham, with whom the proposition originated, explained, at considerable length, the many advantages that would result from such an association. He spoke in the highest terms of approbation of Benefit Societies, and enlarged upon the benevolent uses to which they were made subservient: but, he admitted, that unless the number of members was recruited by young subscribers, in proportion to that of the older ones who were removed in the course of nature, those societies would be broken up and ruined—the new institution, a plan of which he would submit to the meeting, would fully meet the evil which they had reason to dread. The principle of its organization was to make the best possible use of the labour of the members who composed the association, and to give every man an opportunity of reaping the fruits of his industry, skill and ingenuity. He would propose, that it should be composed of sixty members of different professions, who should agree to pay one shilling per week into the general fund: this sum would in one year amount to £150, with which they might commence business: the society might at the end of the year, or sooner if expedient, be enabled to go to market, with money sufficient to buy the commodities they might require; because it would be one of their fundamental rules, that every purchase should be made with ready money, inasmuch as their profits would be increased one-third by the discount obtained on the purchases. He calculated that they spent at the rate of ten shillings per week each, for the various necessaries of life, which sum would amount in a year to £1,500, the profit of which at ten per cent. and five per cent. for discount, which every tradesman would allow, would amount to £234 per year.

They might easily procure an agent to manage their business for one pound per week. The rent of a commodious shew room and premises would not be more than £30 a-year. After these deductions, the society will have a clear income of £152 a-year; a sum much higher than the allowance given by any benefit society with which he was acquainted: and this, it should be kept in mind, was to be obtained by one year's contribution of one shilling a-week. If this were the only end to be derived from the proposed society, it would be policy to form it immediately: but, in order to shew its advantages, in the clearest point of view, and that his calculations had not been exaggerated, he would allude to the money spent in the purchase of some of the necessaries of life, by which means they would see what they gave away in the shape of profit. He would take it for granted that every family consumed a pint of beer daily, for which they paid three-pence; this consumption in a week would be two hundred and ten quarts, for sixty members. Now he had as good ale in his own cellar as was sold in any public house in Leeds, and much better than the generality of what was retailed; and yet, as he only brewed seventeen gallons to two bushels, the cost of each quart was three pence halfpenny. Thus, it would seem, that sixty men were giving away profits to the amount of £2 3s. 9d. a-week, or £113 15s. a-year. As any person can get a license to retail beer, the society might take a license to do so; after deducting the expense of license and paying the duty, they would derive a profit on beer alone, (even supposing that each family drank only one pint of beer a-day) of a least £60 a-year. He did not think that he at all over-rated the profits that would be obtained in the way that he had stated; but it was evident, that they might be increased, if there were any shoemakers among them. Here would be plenty of employment for them; and if more were manufactured than were sufficient to supply the society, the article might be taken to the best market, and the profits arising from the sale of all would go into their own funds. The same might be done in all the domestic trades of the club. The society might also support a respectable secretary, who would keep the accounts, and be a school master to the children of the members, for the same money they were paying to a parcel of old women who could hardly read themselves.

Mr. Carson having entered into some other details in proof of the benefits derived from the proposed society, concluded with moving a resolution to the effect that the principle of it should be recognised by the meeting, and carried into immediate execution. The resolution was put and carried unanimously. Some further discussion then ensued as to the propriety of carrying the views of Mr. Carson into immediate effect; and it was at length agreed, that those who approved of the principle, should put down their names as members of the association.

REMARKS.

1. We have thought proper to introduce into the Co-operator the account of the meeting at Leeds, for various reasons. The speech of Mr. Carson, if properly understood, contains the whole principle of the subject. It contains the observations of a practical mind, intently fixed on the great object of bettering the condition of himself and his fellow workmen in an honorable manner: struggling with the present difficulties of their situation, ("than which," says a high authority, "nothing can be worse") but not cast down: and receiving and imparting this new principle of union with all the sincerity and zeal of an honest, straight forward, and manly heart. Mr. Carson knows what the necessaries of life are, and what their value is, and that if the pence are taken care of, the pounds will take care of themselves.

2. Mr. Carson sees clearly the enormous profits which the working classes are daily giving away to other people, by not marketing for themselves. Other people grow rich upon these profits; and all the riches of the world are in fact got out of them, for they can be nothing else than the overplus of the labour of the workman, above his own subsistence, saved up in the shape of capital. Those who save most, get most capital. The workmen, if united, might save as well as anybody else. There might as well be a company of workmen, as a company of capitalists. A joint labour company, is as simple as a joint stock company. The only difference is that the one has been invented, the other not. But all things must have a beginning. There was a time when joint stock companies did not exist. Capitalists were too ignorant to form them. As the knowledge of capitalists increased, they formed joint stock companies; and as the knowledge of the working classes increases, they will form joint labour companies. They will keep these enormous profits in their own hands. Instead of four or five per cent. interest for their money, they will make ten or fifteen, and by turning their capital round frequently, they may make still more. This is the first and obvious advantage of co-operation.

3. Mr. Carson alludes to the goodness of articles which a club or union would naturally sell in their own shop. This is another very important consideration. It is quite notorious, that every article capable of being adulterated, is adulterated. There are persons who live by carrying on trades expressly for the purpose. The generality of people cannot possibly distinguish genuine articles from counterfeits. Whoever buys the counterfeit for the genuine, cheats himself out of so much health and strength. This is particularly the case with the workman. To him it is of the utmost consequence to have his food pure, and the most nourishment in the least compass. This he will never attain to without a shop of his own, and this shop he can never possess without co-operation.

4. Besides the profit on selling, Mr. Carson mentions the profit on production. It is evident enough, that the manufacturer must have a profit as well as the tradesman. The man who makes the shoes, must have a profit, as well as the men who sell them: here is a double profit given away, as well as a single one. Workmen must have shoes—they must pay for them. Even if ten men were to agree to buy their shoes of the same workman, they would get them better and cheaper. This has never been thought of, simple as it is, yet this would be a degree of co-operation. It is not vice or dishonesty that prevents this, but merely ignorance. But if ten men bought of one shoemaker, he would get the profit; if they went a step farther and employed the man in the capacity of masters, then they would get the profit. About ten pounds capital is sufficient to set up a shoemaker; so that ten men subscribing one pound a-piece, or twenty men, ten shillings each, might immediately invest their money at a much higher rate of interest than can be got in any public security.

5. Mr. Carson speaks of the education of the children of the workman. He does not talk in high flown language of the great lengths to which education might be carried, or of the great quantity of knowledge which might be acquired, but states the simple fact—that with the money they pay at present for being badly taught, they might, by union, for the same expense, have a good master instead of a bad one. Then the children would learn something instead of learning nothing: they might be taught works of industry early, and so be good workmen instead of bad ones: and they might have a master capable of forming the character and moral habits; and so the children would turn out men of honesty, integrity and zeal, instead of being idle, dissolute and vicious.

6. But what gives us most pleasure in this meeting is to see that the principles of co-operation are spreading among the working classes. A few months ago Mr. Carson was a total stranger to them. He had not heard of the existence of any such Society as that in West Street. Ardent and indefatigable in the service of his fellow workmen he was zealous in promoting their good, by the best means which were then known. Now that new means are discovered, he is as zealous in recommending a plan of union of a far superior kind, which must inevitably emancipate the workman from the thralldom of fluctuating markets and insure him a lasting independence.

7. In this manner will all workmen who have more sagacity than the rest lead their companions to entertain the subject of co-operation: to consider its principles, and to make a beginning of practising them. It appeals so directly to their immediate self-interest, that they cannot help preferring that kind of labour, which gives them the whole of the produce, to that, which, while it makes others rich, gives to themselves only a starving portion.



SOCIETIES FORMED.—*Brighton*, 3; *London*, 2; *Worthing*, 1; *Findon*, 1; *Greenwich*, 1; *Belper*, 1; *Duffield*, 1; *Birmingham*, 1; *Kingstanley*, 1; *Loughborough*, 1; *Canterbury*, 1.

SOCIETIES FORMING.—*Brighton*; *Manchester*; *Worcester*; *Derby*; *Leeds*; *Tunbridge*; *Uley*; *Congleton*; *Hampstead*; *Almondbury*; *High Royd*.

THE CO-OPERATOR.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNION ARE POWER :

POWER, DIRECTED BY KNOWLEDGE, IS HAPPINESS :

HAPPINESS IS THE END OF CREATION.

No. 11.

MARCH 1, 1829.

1d

IN CO-OPERATION CAPITAL IS INCOME.

1. The assertion we make at the head of this paper may appear startling and impossible to most of our readers, but we hope to be able to make it good, and by so doing, to shew a new cause of the immense merits of co-operation to the working classes.

2. People who possess independent fortunes distinguish between their capital and their income. They deposit their capital in some investment or security. They lend it to government or to private people, who use it in trade or manufactures. For the use of this capital they are paid annually a certain price or consideration, which is called interest. This interest varies in different countries, at different times, and among different individuals, according to the advantage they are able to make of the capital. All the money which a man receives in the shape of interest he calls income. Upon this income he lives. He enjoys all the comforts and luxuries which his income places within his reach; and he takes care in common prudence not to exceed it.

3. If a man invests his capital in trade or manufactures, under his own management, he has to pay the wages of his workmen of all descriptions, the wear and tear of his machinery, the expenses of his business, &c.; and at last has a certain sum over, which may be called income. He contrives, if possible, to live upon less than that income; and to save part of it to provide against contingencies, or to increase his capital. Still it is this income or overplus alone from which all his enjoyments are to be derived.

4. Capital is laid out partly upon durable property, as houses and machinery; and partly upon food and clothing. All capital which is laid out upon food and clothing is in a constant state of consumption and reproduction. The workmen are continually consuming the food and clothing: but while they are doing so, they are at the same time reproducing it with a profit. Thus, during the year, the capital of the master is consumed by the workmen: but at the end of it the workmen return it to him with a profit. The workmen live upon this capital—it is their income; while the master only lives upon the interest or profit of it. He reproduces none of the capital himself; the workman does all this.

5. Were it not for the workman the master would find his capital of very little use. He must either eat up his capital and then starve, or he must turn to and work himself. If the workmen did not reproduce the whole of the capital the master would be injured and gradually ruined: and if it were only reproduced without a profit the master would still be unable to live. What he looks to is the profit or overplus; and upon this his income and living depend.

6. When the interest of money is at five per cent. the capitalist lends his hundred pounds to the workman, who lives upon it and reproduces the hundred and five pounds: or perhaps, in consequence of the number of agents employed, the workman does not consume more than eighty or sixty pounds, but still produces the hundred and five; of which five go to the capitalist, and the twenty or forty to the agents, who stand between the workman and the capitalist. Still the same truth returns upon us—that the income of the capitalist is the interest only: but the income of the workmen is the capital itself.

7. We wish to point out the great importance of the workman's having capital of his own. If many agents stand between him and the capitalist, so that he gets but a small proportion of the hundred pounds, it shews what enormous profits he is daily giving away as it were to other people. If on the other hand he consumes the whole of the hundred pounds, it shews the extreme difficulty of becoming a capitalist, or in other words, of saving an independence, and therefore the utter hopelessness of the workman's condition in the present form of society.

8. If a man could live upon forty pounds a-year, which is about the income of many workmen, he must, in order to be independent, lay by eight hundred pounds, the interest of which, at five per cent. is forty pounds. But if a man can live upon forty pounds a-year he can live for six months upon twenty pounds. Now six months is time enough for a workman to manufacture his goods and bring them to market. Even many kinds of food may be raised within that period. Therefore if a workman had twenty pounds capital of his own he might labour for himself, raise his food, or bring his manufactures to market, and replace his capital as it was consumed. Therefore a capital of twenty pounds would be as good to the workman as a capital of eight hundred pounds to the idle independent man.

9. A single workman would no doubt be liable to many accidents and misfortunes, any of which might destroy or diminish his capital, and occasion his ruin. Every man's capital is continually increasing or diminishing. Every thing is in a state of fluctuation: nothing remains stationary. The world itself is a *perpetual motion*: every thing in it is also in a perpetual movement. The affairs of men observe the same law. No one remains at rest. All is life, activity and bustle. One man saves his twenty pounds: he employs it as capital in trade: he saves the profit: he increases his dealings: he accumulates more: he becomes rich: he gets among the higher classes; and looks down with contempt upon his humble origin. But the greater part of workmen, if they save a few pounds, they may for a while enjoy a few additional comforts: but the losses of trade, or sickness overtake them, and sweep away their hard earned savings. Thus there is but one end chiefly to all workmen—poverty and misery.

10. This is the fate of the single workman. But if many workmen were to join together, each with a capital of twenty pounds, that is, with half a-year's subsistence in hand, these united men could set to work among themselves, and for themselves. Some could produce food for the common consumption, while others could produce manufactures for their own use, or for the public market.

Each man would then be independent—that is, he would have constant employment: he would not be dependent upon the business of a master, or the fluctuation of work during the different seasons of the year: he would not be reduced to distress by sickness and old age; for as all could not be sick or grow old together, so those that were healthy and young would easily support those few, who, having given their labour to the common stock during health and youth, would now only consume a part of what had been laid up out of their own labour.

11. We have now proved two things—first, that if a number of workmen unite together in co-operation, a capital of twenty pounds a-piece is sufficient to make them all, with their families, independent for ever: secondly, that to make a man independent without work, a capital of eight hundred pounds is required; and even then he can enjoy no greater comforts than those of the commonest workman. The same conclusion may be stated in other words—that because twenty pounds are contained in eight hundred pounds forty times, therefore a man would be forty times as long acquiring an independence upon the individual system as upon the Co-operative system. Therefore also, if it would require forty years to make a man independent on one system, it would require only one year upon the other. And again, eight hundred pounds is sufficient for the independence of only one family upon the individual system: but it is sufficient for the independence of forty families upon the Co-operative system.

12. Thus we have proved that “*in Co-operation Capital is Income!*” that is, a Co-operative Society which has a capital of forty pounds a-head, is as well off for all the necessaries of life as a private individual with an income of forty pounds a-year. But we have proved much more than this; for though the independent man must have an income to carry him through the whole of the year, the workman only wants support till he is able to exchange the produce of his labour in the market—till he is able, as the phrase is, to turn his capital round. We have supposed in the above argument that the capital is turned round twice a-year: but there are many cases in which it takes a much shorter time; and in whatever proportion it does so, it gives a corresponding advantage to co-operation over the system of individual property. We have known persons who were able to maintain themselves and family in comfort upon a capital of five pounds. Dealing in articles, for which there was a ready sale, they were able to turn their capital round in a few days; and thus supported themselves upon the immediate and large profits of a small capital.

13. The above view of the subject is extremely important to the working classes—because it brings the period at which they may expect to become perfectly independent within a very moderate compass. Any body of men, uniting together in co-operation, have a moral certainty of seeing their families independent before they die: but upon the present individual system this is utterly impossible; and indeed nobody expects it. On the contrary, it is thought a law of nature that the workman should be always poor; and that it really was the intention of Providence that the greater number of mankind should for ever remain poor, destitute, hungry and vicious. Some go so far as to brand all attempts at improving the condition of the workman as irreligious and impious:—a greater libel upon the goodness of God cannot be imagined.

14. Co-operation affords to the workman a near prospect of independence for himself and family—in the present state of society that is impossible. All that a workman can do at present is to place his money in the Savings' Bank, or to become a member of a Benefit Society. In the former case he only puts himself in the

situation we have described, of receiving a small interest for his money, which is utterly inadequate ever to secure his independence: in the latter case he does indeed insure himself some relief in sickness, and since Benefit Societies have been improved, he may also obtain an allowance in old age; but this is so extremely small, and placed at such a distance from the present moment, that it requires much more frugality and perseverance to accomplish, than would be sufficient to secure an ample independence in co-operation in a few years.

15. On the contrary, the independence offered by co-operation is near at hand. As soon as twenty pounds are accumulated, the independence of one workman and his family is secured. For every additional twenty pounds, another workman may be made independent, and so on till all are provided for. If any of the members are already in good employment, they may remain in it, while the surplus capital is invested in machinery or other desirable improvements, by which capital is made more productive. Or it may be invested in a school for the education of their children, which is equally necessary for all, whether in co-operation or out of it. This indeed is one of the greatest advantages which the system will afford. It will secure a good education, combining industry and knowledge, for all the children of the members. Of this, we shall speak more at large hereafter: at present, we think it sufficient to have proved, that in co-operation, "*Capital is Income*," and that independence is within the grasp of a few short years.

SOCIETIES FORMED.—*Brighton, 4; London, 2; Manchester, 2; Worthing; Findon, Branch of Worthing; Greenwich; Kingstancy; Congleton; High Royd; Belper; Duffield; Birmingham; Loughborough; Canterbury; Derby; Worcester; Uley; Almond-bury; Preston; Nottingham; Tunbridge Wells; Kidderminster; Bethnal Green; Stepney; Bristol.*

SOCIETIES FORMING.—*Leeds; Kirk Heaton; Hampstead; White Chapel; Shadwell; Mary-le-bone.*

THE CO-OPERATOR.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNION ARE POWER:
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HAPPINESS IS THE END OF CREATION.

No. 12. APRIL 1, 1829. 1d.

BENEFIT SOCIETIES.

1. In recommending Co-operation to the attention of the working classes, we do not pretend to have made any discoveries, either as to the evils of their present situation or as to the objects at which they may justly aim, and at which they ought to aim. We only declare facts which are well known to every body, and so well known as to be the subject of daily remark and observation. And we only propose objects which are continually laboured after, and not only by the working classes but by their best friends among the higher classes, that is, a greater degree of comfort and independence.

2. The grand difference between our little paper and the ponderous volumes which have been published on this subject, is, that we recommend that the objects which all of us have at heart, should be pursued in a different manner, and by different methods from those which have been hitherto tried. Our argument is extremely simple. We say, "the trials you have already made have been notoriously unsuccessful: you have made them in every possible manner which your system admitted of; therefore, all further endeavours upon the same plan, are perfectly absurd, and must infallibly continue to disappoint you. Therefore you must do one of two things—you must either give up entirely the pursuit after independence, or you must carry on the pursuit by a different road and upon a new system."

3. Every day's experience shews that man will not give up the pursuit after independence, nor is it in his nature to do so. It is as impossible for a man not to wish to be independent of want, as it is not to wish for his dinner; the two wishes lie so close together, that the one is inseparable from the other. As long as men experience hunger and thirst, they must wish to set those two enemies at defiance by some well stored magazine. Never therefore will the working classes cease to look about for independence and security. The twelve and sixteen hours which they daily devote to gratify this wish, are so many hours spent in the severe school of this hard taskmaster. It will be strange indeed if this cruel discipline does not at least teach them the A B C of life.

4. Man has been often called a social animal, and we are said to depend one upon another for the greater part of our comforts and enjoyments. But having advanced thus far upon a true principle, we think we can do without its farther company; and we declare, that when men have once determined to live together, they have immediately determined also that they are natural enemies to each other: instead of helping one another to rise in comfort, they are continually depressing each other, doing and undoing, building up and pulling down. When men unite, they do it with fear and trembling, as if each feared that his confidence would be abused by his neighbour.

5. In the midst of all this folly and madness, it is some satisfaction to the benevolent mind to observe how infallibly better

principles insinuate themselves among men, though their progress is so slow as to be for a long time imperceptible. The power which the human mind possesses of distinguishing pleasure from pain, and of observing the causes of each, after a great deal of exercise and experience, and a great many doubts and difficulties, brings us to the conclusion, that pleasure and pain must be understood in their causes, and are inseparably connected with them: that moral events are as certain and unchangeable, as physical ones, and above all, that *man can as easily control the one as the other, when these causes are known.*

6. It was a conviction of this kind which gave rise to Benefit Societies; they form a grand æra in the history of the working classes; they are a proof that the working classes have minds, that they are not brutes, that they can think as well as work, that they are rational beings as well as animals. We assert, that the men who could Co-operate in the humane and prudent views of these Societies, are capable of *better things*, are capable of reflection and reasoning, are capable of acquiring sound practical and theoretic knowledge, and if they be given time and information, they will then be capable of TRUE CO-OPERATION.

7. We admire the institution of Benefit Societies; we think they have been productive of many blessings to the working classes; they are wise, prudent, and humane in principle; they have saved many an honest family from want and misery, and from the moral degradation of parochial relief. We wish to allow them every merit which belongs to them, because we mean to compare them with Co-operation, in which comparison they will be found to be, not only infinitely inferior, but totally unworthy of notice. They are excellent as far as they go, and still more excellent as introductory to the better system of Co-operation, but compared with that system, they are good for nothing.

8. It is a fair remark on all occasions, "if you dislike our system, shew us a better." Do not pull down, unless you mean to build up. Now then, that we have got a better system, we may justly point out the evils of others, and we may boldly assert, "the best part of your plan was its being the forerunner of a superior one." The best feature in Benefit Societies, is the practical proof they exhibit of a regular organisation of workmen, in a peaceable and rational manner, for their mutual protection against the accidents of life. Workmen have laid up weekly a proportion of their earnings; they have drawn up rules and regulations; they have adhered to them systematically; they have accumulated large sums of money; they have reposed confidence in each other; they have managed the funds with fidelity and honor, and they have administered them punctually according to the equal claims of the members. All this is ample proof that workmen are capable of Co-operation, and of that cultivation of mind which is absolutely necessary for its success.

9. The property of a Benefit Society is common property. The fundamental error is the injudicious employment of the capital; in consequence of this, the return is very small, the accumulation exceedingly slow, and an insuperable bar is placed in the way of the real independence of the members. The money is lent to a capitalist, who with it employs the members, it may be, to produce upon their own capital a vast return, out of which he gives to them five per cent. and keeps all the rest, ten, fifteen, or twenty per cent. for himself. If any men can be said to "cut their own throats," it must be a set of workmen, who toil through life, stint themselves of their daily food, and accumulate a capital for the chief benefit of other people. The men of capital are no doubt exceedingly happy to have this extra capital put into their hands, for the purpose of making an extra profit, and of giving them an extra power

over the working classes. Whoever gets the management of this capital, whether a government or private people, they get so much power over the workmen, which no one can controul. Capital is power. Whoever has capital has power. Capital necessarily accumulates even in the hands of a few, by the ordinary transactions of society. Men seldom have power without abusing it. All this is plain, straight forward dealing. It falls sooner or later on the workman, who cannot compete with capital. Capital produces machinery, and machinery, working against the labourer, starves him. All this is hard enough, but last and worst of all comes the workman himself, in the shape of a Benefit Society, accumulates an extra capital by dint of short commons and overtime work, to be invested in machinery, for the sole purpose as it were of reducing his wages down to semi-starvation.

10. The members of Benefit Societies are liable to be thrown out of work, they may be unable to pay their subscription, and may forfeit all claims upon the funds. They are distressed for work, when the funds of the Society would supply them amply, were they properly applied. They have saved a capital, which is applied somewhere in giving people employment; they themselves want employment, other people are employed upon their capital, while they can get no employment at all. This is just the same as if they had earned a dinner and cooked it, and another were to come and eat it; for they have saved a capital, other people are kept at work by it while they are starving: they are actually losing both the interest of the capital and the capital itself.

11. Many Societies possess capital enough to employ all the members, if employment were the object. Frequently the capital lies dead for want of a good investment; which, if it were employing the members, would yield a weekly return, far superior to what legal investment can ever give. The best investment would be the employment of members. As long as the capital is insufficient to employ all, a good investment can never be wanting. When all the members are employed, it would be time to look for other investments. The ordinary one might then be adopted if agreeable, though a much better one would be the purchase of machinery, to abridge labour and increase production, and so lay the foundation of an indefinite accumulation of capital. The machinery would work for the labourer, instead of against him; and the whole produce, if worked day and night, would be his, instead of the small portion called wages. For instance, if such a Society had a stocking frame, and more stockings were wanted by the members than could be made by the usual work of the day; if the man could work overtime and double his produce, the members would have double the quantity of stockings for their use; but if the man were to do this for a master, by way of doubling his wages, he would only glut the market, and deprive himself of work and wages altogether.

12. We have allowed that Benefit Societies are useful to the members. They might be made far more so if the funds were invested more profitably in the employment of the members. But they are useful to another class of men besides the members—and that is, to all those who contribute to parochial funds. When we consider that capital would be of no use without the workman, and that a very small portion of the produce of labour goes to the labourer, it seems but right that in sickness and old age the labourer should be supported out of that capital which he has been the chief means of accumulating. It would also be right that his children should be educated out of the same capital, since it is impossible, as experience proves, that proper masters can be obtained for the small pittance which the labourer can spare, who shall be capable of forming the minds and habits of the children to industry, religion and virtue.

13. But by the contrivance of a Benefit Society, the burthen, as it is called, of supporting the labourer in sickness and old age, is thrown back from the capitalist upon the labourer himself. The food and healthy accommodation which is required for supporting the human frame in a state of vigorous exertion is diminished, in order to form a fund, which in sickness and old age, when the man is worn out in the service of the capitalist, may save the capitalist from any farther expense; and may enable him to enjoy, without alloy, the great hoardings from the poor man's labour—while that poor man sinks into the grave unheeded, unpitied, “unwept, unhonored, and unsung.”

14. Therefore Benefit Societies relieve the capitalist even more than they do the workman. They first give him additional capital to make more profit of the labour of the workman: they then save him the trouble and expense of supporting the workman in sickness and old age. All the capital which is saved by a Benefit Society is so much comfort sacrificed by the members, for the benefit of the capitalist: all the profit made out of this capital, by the capitalist, is so much clear money given to him by the Society: all the income paid to members, on account of the Society, is so much income saved to the capitalist—who otherwise would be obliged legally to support the same individuals in sickness and old age. On all these accounts a Benefit Society is an ingenious contrivance on the part of workmen to rob themselves and benefit the upper classes.

15. The argument of this paper may appear at first sight to be inconsistent with itself. We first assert that Benefit Societies are good things: and we then appear to assert that they are not: and we seem to conclude that they are more beneficial to the upper classes than to the members. The spirit of independence which they inculcate is invaluable, and worth any price. The allowance from a Benefit Society is received with more pleasure and satisfaction than it would be in any other shape: and the feeling that a man has a right to what he receives is also invaluable. Such an allowance, which is a man's due, avoids all the disputes and bickerings of parochial relief, and all the obligation of charity. The benefit which the upper classes receive from such Societies has been entirely overlooked. It is, however, a real and substantial benefit, conferred solely by the labour of the workmen. Many families are enabled to keep carriages, servants, and splendid establishments out of this very benefit—while the men who give it have not common comforts.

16. All these facts proclaim with a loud voice that no society will ever relieve the workman but Co-operation. They will for ever remain an ignorant, degraded, slavish caste, till they unite to have a common capital, and to employ themselves upon that capital. Then will their fetters fall off, as if touched with a talisman: then will they hold up their heads and look around them, with the feelings of conscious independence and virtue: then will labour be sweet, and industry a pleasure: the rising sun will be the harbinger of a day of joyful occupation: the setting sun, with the sweet notes of the evening birds, will summon them to a sound repose: “the sun shall not hurt them by day—neither the moon by night”: all creation shall smile upon them: existence shall become a blessing, and the Author of it the subject of their unfeigned gratitude.

Fifty-six Societies, upon the principles of Co-operation, have been established.

THE CO-OPERATOR.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNION ARE POWER :

POWER, DIRECTED BY KNOWLEDGE, IS HAPPINESS :

HAPPINESS IS THE END OF CREATION.

No. 13.

MAY 1, 1829.

1d.

BENEFIT SOCIETIES.—PART II.

1. We should not have asserted in our last number that Benefit Societies were very ill calculated to secure the comfort and independence of the workman, unless we had had something better to offer to their notice. Benefit Societies were the first contrivance among workmen to avert the evils which the changes in society, the spread of machinery, the accumulation of large mercantile capitals, were bringing upon them. Even the landowner began to give up the hospitable establishment of his forefathers: he gradually withdrew his affections from his dependents—his old domestics and peasantry were exchanged for the more gaudy productions of commerce—his dealings with his neighbours became a matter of money calculation, and he estimated his importance by the figures in his banker's book, and not by the number of grateful and happy hearts by which he was surrounded.

2. From this time the workman began to be a drug upon the market: his little perquisites, his right of common, his cow, his little piece of ground, fell off one by one: he was reduced to his mere wages, summer and winter. If he fell sick he had no resource—if he was old he had no friend. While he earned his wages he was worth them: when disabled from work he was a burthen. Deprived of all his little capital and his extra sources of supply, he was expected to "save up" a new capital, and to become a fundholder—"a workman fundholder!" It was even pressed upon him as a duty, and there were not wanting advocates who maintained, that the workman, so reduced in his means and resources, who should not lay by an independence against sickness and old age, *ought to starve*. If any system could be called a mockery of the poor man and his sorrows, it was surely this—first to take from him the means of saving, and then to preach to him the duty of doing it. Alas! every day more food is wasted at the tables of the idle, than would suffice for all the sick and aged of the whole nation.

3. Far be it from us to assert that there was any intention of placing the workman in this cruel situation. We grieve indeed for him, but we should grieve more if we did not believe that the same causes which brought these evils upon him, would hereafter be productive of his substantial happiness. One wave carries a vessel upon a sand-bank—the next lifts her over it into smooth water. The progress of arts, manufactures and machinery has brought the workmen to be estimated like cattle; and the same progress will soon put an end to that anomaly, and land them safely on their own shores of peace and plenty.

4. The workmen thus severed from the ancient means of protection and comfort, began to look to each other. It was evident that sickness and old age, though they might happen to all, were, in fact, the lot of very few; and therefore that a small contribution from a great number would not be irksome, while it would protect the few. But we should do injustice to the members of these Societies if we imputed to them merely motives of self-protection. Honorable as these motives are, there were other and still better principles at work. There was a common sympathy and pity—a desire to relieve each other; and a wish to afford this relief effectually, when wanted, by accumulating a previous common fund, which might be drawn upon liberally without inconvenience to any one. It is mainly upon these good, kind and generous principles, that we still rely, for the attainment of Co-operation. It is right, indeed to rouse men to a sense of their evils by the most forcible appeal to their wrongs and miseries, and so to bring their attention to the subject; but unless we can afterwards succeed in exciting also their generous instincts, nothing good, nothing great, nothing permanent, will be effected.

5. In this way Benefit Societies arose: they were the first and feeble efforts of the Co-operative principle, viz., a common capital and common interests. They have now attained to a mighty growth—they cover the land—government is called upon to legislate upon the subject of them; and while their advantages are great over a state in which no attempt is made at mutual protection, their disadvantages are too many and too glaring to enable them to stand against Co-operation.

6. One grand defect of Benefit Societies is, that the principle of UNION is not carried far enough; for, what do the members say? "We are convinced, by woeful experience, that we can have no security against the greatest evils of life, viz., sickness and old age, independent of each other. As long as we consider ourselves as enemies, or even as indifferent to one another, we shall be liable to as great evils as if we were mere savages. As long as we pretend to be independent of each other, we shall be lamentably convinced of our error and folly, by falling into beggary and distress without the power of alleviation. Our wives and children must fall into the same gulf with us, from which all their cries and groans shall never be able to release them: a gulf so deep, that the sympathies of our fellow creatures cannot reach its dark recesses." Amply, alas! has experience confirmed this apprehension. Daily, at this moment, does accumulating distress proclaim, that when the poor man cries there shall be none effectually to help him.

7. "Why then (they ask) should we not unite? We live neighbours—we till the same fields—we work at the same looms—we worship in the same temple—we have many enjoyments together, and we delight in each other's society. Let us, therefore, have a common purse; and, making use of those powers and faculties which are common to all, let us accumulate a capital which shall be common to all, that we may set at defiance enemies which are common to all."

8. Thus the union is good as far as it goes: but, in carrying it into effect, its defective extent compels the workman to ape and imitate the system of the mere capitalist, between whom and the workman there must always remain an impassable barrier. A Benefit Society is a Joint Stock Company, and their capital is therefore of no use till put into productive labour and returned with a profit. But the puny subscriptions which workmen are able to make, keeps down the capital to an insignificant amount, and is more like the shadow of protection than its substance. The few points upon which the members unite, are almost lost, when compared with the many still more important ones upon which they are at variance.

9. As a number of capitalists, when they unite, bring together that in which their strength consists, which is CAPITAL: so when a number of workmen unite, they should bring together that in which *their* strength consists, which is LABOUR. Whatever be the kind of labour which people are accustomed to, to that they should apply, and out of that they should raise their common funds and property. Village Societies should hire a piece of land, and compel each member to give a certain quantity of labour to it. The whole produce, after paying rent and taxes, should be their own. This produce might either be converted into money and then into manufactures, or it might be placed in a common store for those contingencies which are contemplated by the laws of the Society. It is evident that this labour would in a manner cost them nothing, for they would employ upon it as much over-time as they might please, and all their leisure time. When work was scanty they would go to their own land. Nay, they would soon have the power of selling a less quantity of their labour to their masters, and employing more of it on their own account. For this smaller quantity they would get the same wages as for the greater quantity: for the being able to curtail the quantity of labour would have the same effect as diminishing the number of labourers, which all political economists allow would raise wages, upon the common principle of supply and demand, and upon the common principle of the *competitive system*. The competition would then take place among the masters and landlords. As soon as ever the labourers unite upon a LABOUR PRINCIPLE instead of a capital principle, they will make the dust fly in all directions, and in every sense of the word; and it is great odds but this dust will blind some of the masters. When a man can say, "every spit of earth I turn up, is my own: every seed I sow, every plant I rear, are all my own," he will work with some spirit—he will be put upon his mettle; and we shall then see what the wonders of hearty labour really are.

10. Societies formed in a town should in like manner give mechanic labour to the common stock. This labour would supply certain comforts to the members in cases provided for by the laws, and the rest would be converted into capital for other contingencies. The Society in West Street, Brighton, has already found the advantage of this principle. Though the progress of the Society does not enable it as yet to form a positive law upon the subject, yet the zeal and energy of a certain number of the members have enabled them to prepare a great quantity of work on their Brighton premises for the use of their garden. This has been a voluntary *labour loan* to the Society, executed some times in the evening, some times in the day, when any of the members have been slack of work. At the times when other workmen swarm to the pot house to *consume*, these men resort to their own workshop in order to *produce*.

11. It has, therefore, been a great mistake in Benefit Societies, to follow the system of the capitalists, when their circumstances are so diametrically opposed to each other. Too many capitalists have

endeavoured to make the workmen feel and understand this difference in the most galling and aggravating manner. "To work is to disgrace oneself!" Fellow workmen, shall we be thus stung to the quick for ever, and for ever take it quietly? The very worm when trod upon will turn upon its enemy. If, then, our caste is so very distinct, let us make it more so. The power is in our own hands. All capital is made out of labour—labour is our own. Upon this labour let us build our principle of relief and self-protection, and "the gates of hell shall not prevail against us." The money which a Society can lay by in weekly subscriptions, is a mere trifle, compared with the produce it can accumulate by the daily loan of half an hour's labour from each member.

12. Besides the produce to be obtained from the labour of the members, this same principle would easily apply to all the families of the members. All the children from the age of seven or eight might be usefully employed. Many of those which are grown up idle away their time for want of employment. "Masters do not want their services, work is dull, places are scarce." Such are the exclamations we hear when we ask the idle young people why they do nothing. Nothing is more evident than that all these persons might give their labour to the society; and that their labour alone, conducted systematically, might be so directed as to supply abundantly the comforts of life, to all the sick and aged members of the Society.

13. Let then the labourer know his own strength, and then let him use it. Let all future Societies be formed upon a LABOUR PRINCIPLE, for no other will protect them. Let the capital of the Society be made out of PRODUCE, and not out of INTEREST. *Interest* is a very cunning way of making money for those who *can not labour*. Those who have persuaded the labourer to work for them, and not for himself, have done very well for themselves. They have feathered their own nest well at the expense of other birds. But these things cannot continue for ever. Young birds grow older every day, and "old birds (they say) are no longer to be caught with chaff." It will be very strange indeed if the workmen, when they have once found their way into their own forest, do not pick out all the finest trees for themselves; or if they do not themselves enjoy the finest fruit out of their own garden. Nor is the day far distant. More has been done for practical Co-operation since this little publication commenced, than during ages before. It is the nature of all sound principles to march with an accelerated step. A Society which learns the slow march this year, will learn the quick march the next; and the year after will march in double quick time. Every year, therefore, will the influence of Co-operation spread with increasing energy; nor will any obstacle arrest its course, till it has reached, in splendid triumph, the utmost limits of the habitable globe.

There are at present Sixty-three Societies formed upon the principle of Co-operation, in various parts of the kingdom.

THE CO-OPERATOR

KNOWLEDGE AND UNION ARE POWER :
POWER, DIRECTED BY KNOWLEDGE, IS HAPPINESS :
HAPPINESS IS THE END OF CREATION.

No. 14.

JUNE 1, 1829.

1d.

BENEFIT SOCIETIES.—PART III.

1. We hope our readers will pardon us for introducing the subject of Benefit Societies a third time to their notice. The importance of our cause demands, that we should examine, thoroughly, the ground we are at present standing upon, as being the approach to that of which we are going to take possession. As far as Benefit Societies go, we have all classes in our favor. It has been carried by general acclamation, that they ought to be universal. Every man, woman and child, ought to be insured, either in a Benefit or Life Society: then might the price of security be much less, and its extent much greater. Provision for this purpose ought to be made in early life, particularly in those large Seminaries which have been established for the education of the working classes. Had that system, which now prevails, been founded in comprehensive views, and in a genuine and enlightened philanthropy, the principles of Benefit Societies would have formed an inseparable part of it. A judicious use of that influence, which the upper classes and parochial bodies possess, might, before this time, have drawn every workman into an assurance against sickness and old age—and thus, might entirely have anticipated the necessity for parish relief, and have prevented the growth of the demon pauperism.

2. As it is, Benefit Societies have been allowed to struggle alone into life, and to wage unassisted war with all the elements of tempestuous strife. The working classes have been left chiefly to themselves—to the science of their own ignorance, and the light of their own darkness—to glean empty husks, and pick up random and broken straws. By way of comforting them in the vale of darkness, they have been told, by too many, that science and light, and the knowledge of distinguishing chaff from grain, and tares from wheat, are dangerous to their peace and happiness.

3. Fortunately, society is in a state of continual movement. This movement is the result of its inherent energies, given to it by its irresistible author. It faithfully accomplishes his purposes, which, though long to our apprehensions, in bringing about, must ultimately prove splendid and happy. All men shall partake of them, the lowest as well as the highest; and vice and poverty shall be banished from earth.

4. We have mentioned, in our preceding numbers, two VICES, which are inherent in Benefit Societies. [See Co-operator, No. 12.] The first is the mode of employing and investing their capital—and the second, [see Co-operator, No. 13] the mode of collecting that capital, by means of money instead of labour. We have now to mention a third vice, which is, the holding the meetings at a public house.

1. The first evil of this is, the enormous waste of the strength and sinews of the Society—money. It is known, that nearly half a million of money is thus annually wasted. This goes to enrich the publican; and is so much taken from the bed of sickness and the

couch of old age. Thus the poor workman, as usual, is always studying to enrich others instead of himself—first the capitalist—then the payers of scot and lot—and now the publican. This half million a-year, if spent upon the Co-operative principle, would, at twenty pounds per head, provide independence for twenty-five thousand families, annually—which families would produce a common capital, plenty of food, houses and land, to be inherited and augmented by their posterity for ever. But supposing that men cannot pay their weekly quota without beer and tobacco, and a newspaper, could they not obtain these much cheaper and better in a room of their own? Undoubtedly they could. Read Mr. Carson's speech, in the 10th number of the "Co-operator." He is a workman; and having a little more sense than his neighbours, turns it to good account, in the common concerns of life.

II. The second evil of the public house is, its direct tendency to demoralize all who breathe its air. Poison floats within its walls, and infects both the minds and bodies of those who enter them. It is "the gate of hell: none who enter in, return in their right senses," to tell the tale of its corruption and pollutions. Most of the vices and crimes of society may be traced to the public house—"drunkenness, murders, revellings and such like." How many honest men have been ruined! How many wives and children brought to beggary and shame, by the habits of the public house! By the influence of sympathy, those who go, must imitate their fellows: one visit leads to another; and happy are they who escape with a portion of their reputation.

III. This demoralizing effect extends over the minds of those who expose themselves to the poison, and follows them in all their occupations: it haunts them at home, and renders their own fire-side irksome: the temper becomes irritable; excitement becomes necessary; and the man is driven out to seek more amusing and noisy society than can be found in the quiet routine of duty.

IV. We cannot pass over the evident truth, that the money which is paid for the use of a room, in a public house, with the money that is spent there, would pay the rent of large and commodious premises. There the members might have their own news room open every day, instead of once in a-while: they might be supplied with various newspapers, and other interesting and amusing publications; and by meeting daily, they might aid each other with practical information, in their various trades.

V. In a place like Brighton, where there are many Benefit Societies, it would be easy to have a house, built by common labour and capital, of the most useful description: even the idle members of so many societies would be enough to erect it, if they chose, almost free of expense. Labour is the most expensive article in all buildings: that labour they possess, and the moment they please, they may convert it into a substantial building. This is so evident, when pointed out, that if they do not see far enough to enter into genuine Co-operation, we hope they cannot much longer delay the enlargement of their present principles. Some of them have many hundreds of pounds of capital lying dead: if converted into a building, of this kind, it would immediately be rendered productive.

VI. Lastly, such a building would afford a most excellent opportunity of establishing a school for the education of their children, under their own masters. There they might get a good education for the same price as they now pay for a bad one; and when the school should have been furnished with books, lessons, instruments, and other materials of education, the current expenses would be reduced to a trifle.

5. Another vice of the Benefit Society is, the composition and character of its members. Sufficient attention is not paid to

character, because little depends upon it. Provided a man is tolerably healthy, and pays his subscription, he is thought a worthy member: nor are his qualities, as a workman, at all taken into account. It is never a question whether a member will be a credit or a disgrace to a society: all his credit depends on paying his money, and if discharged for non-payment, he is not regretted, and the society is not thought to suffer any loss. Thus, the same mistake is continued, of confounding money and labour, and the consequence must inevitably be, that these societies can never secure the independence of the workman.

6 The Benefit Society is formed upon two truths: division is weakness; union is strength. Both these truths are sound to the greatest possible extent. The extreme of division is ruin, and therefore, even the most bitter enemies have a resting point beyond which they will not carry their havoc. Without the wampum mankind would be lost. On the other hand the extreme of union is co-operation. Every degree of union has its corresponding advantage; the more union, the greater is the blessing; and perfect union, as in Co-operation, would fill the world with peace, plenty, virtue, religion, and happiness.

7 But Benefit Societies carry this union (their fundamental principle) but a very little way. Beyond the club meetings, the pot and the pipe, there is little union even among the members. There is in a manner, no sympathy in common pursuits, no help, no intercourse. There is indeed an acquaintance, but no friendship. No pursuits above labour are entered into, nothing intellectual is proposed or even thought of. To suggest any thing like a library, or a system of mutual instruction, would probably be ridiculed as folly. "Let them mind their work," it is said, "and leave learning to their betters." Yet how absurd and preposterous is such an observation! A Benefit Society involves a knowledge of the most refined principles of science and calculation. "Of these principles," say the enemies of knowledge (and therefore of man), "Benefit Societies ought to know nothing!" No! the pot and the pipe are quite enough for them! The chimæra of ancient history is a perfect beauty, compared with that modern monster, which has the effrontery to pronounce that workmen, members of a Benefit Society, ought not to know their own principles.

8. The members of Benefit Clubs are not the only persons interested in them. Their wives and children ought to form a very prominent feature in them. It is in fact for these that the clubs are instituted, yet these are put out of sight, and receive no kindly influence whatever from the association. It would indeed be injudicious to bring the families to a public-house, but this is only another reason why a society should have a house of its own, where all the families of the members might meet in harmony, and promote mutual friendship and good offices. Why should females be so studiously excluded from cheerful and friendly meetings? Are there no innocent amusements which all might share in common? We can tell them there are. We were never more gratified than at such a meeting of our Co-operative Society in West Street. There we saw for the first time, persons of all ages, of the working classes, meeting together with cheerfulness and happiness. The evening commenced with an account of the society; after this they partook of tea and other refreshments; then some of them amused themselves with dancing, and others in conversation; and the evening concluded with various songs and other music. The whole expense of this meeting was not sixpence per head. Thus the females were entertained and benefitted as well as the members; the nature of the society was made more intelligible to many; some who had been prejudiced against it, were made converts; and all the bands of social union were strengthened.

9. We ought not to pass over the glaring fact, that for want of this KNOWLEDGE which is so much abused, Benefit Societies too often end in RUIN. They depend upon very refined and intricate principles, far beyond the reach of the members; indeed, beyond the grasp of even the man of science. The most judicious principle upon which to establish them, is still doubtful—so is the fair rate of subscription for different ages and sexes. Too many have therefore failed. Too many individuals, after subscribing for many years, have fallen into sickness just as the funds were exhausted. The society is built upon a host of calculations, and if any one of them is erroneous, it will fall; or even if correct, it is still liable to fall, from the occasional occurrence of great improbabilities. The best guard against this would be the extension of the union-principle to greater numbers—for instance, to whole counties. But a mind, enlightened enough to adopt and practice such a union, would soon perceive that a far easier, safer, and more beneficial union, would be that of Co-operation.

10. It is more to our present purpose to point out that a radical vice will for ever corrupt the funds of a Benefit Society, even when the calculations are all correct; and this is what we first mentioned, the mode of employing the capital. It travels round a curious circle; first it comes from the workman; then it goes to the treasurer; then to the lawyer; then to the capitalist and his lawyer; then to the workman again. In like manner, the produce of labour goes from the workman to the capitalist; then to the lawyers; then to the treasurer; and lastly to the workman himself. So that all the capitalists, lawyers, treasurers, and publicans, with their profits and salaries, who live upon the circle, must live in comfort, before the sick workman, who first saved the capital, and then reproduced it, can put to his lips a mouthful of food or a drop of medicine. Now as the interest of capital is continually diminishing, of which the Savings' Banks afford a living proof, the time will come when Benefit Societies will die a natural death. No profitable investment will remain for their funds, upon present principles. The only remedy then, if not before, will be Co-operation; and as the produce of labour, by the progress of knowledge and machinery is continually increasing, Co-operation must necessarily survive all other systems, and draw all mankind into its bosom.

11. Farewell! then, to Benefit Societies, as soon as ever the working classes understand the value of labour, and that "union and knowledge are power." We will now take our leave of them, by summing up the defects we have pointed out in them:—first, they employ their capital badly, by lending it to capitalists, who profit by it more than they do, while also they may be starving, for want of employment: second, they benefit the parish rates more than themselves, since the labourer has a moral and legal right to support, in sickness and old age: third, they overlook entirely, their peculiar strength, namely, the labour principle, by contributing money instead of labour: fourth, they have no opportunity of enriching themselves by voluntary labour: fifth, they lose the labour of those members of their families who have no employment: sixth, they are connected with the public house system, which is expensive—demoralizes the members—weakens the domestic ties—is incompatible with mental improvement, and the knowledge of their own principles—with having premises of their own—with a useful co-operation with other societies—and with any attempts at obtaining a better education for their children: seventh, they pay too little attention to the characters of members: eighth, they limit their usefulness, by excluding useful knowledge—by excluding members of families—by narrowing the social feelings, and not making provision for cheerful and innocent recreation: ninth, they are liable to be ruined by miscalculation; and tenth, they must be ultimately ruined by the continual lowering of interest money.

THE CO-OPERATOR.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNION ARE POWER :

POWER, DIRECTED BY KNOWLEDGE, IS HAPPINESS :

HAPPINESS IS THE END OF CREATION.

No. 15.

JULY 1, 1829.

1d.

TRADE UNIONS.—PART I.

1. Hail sacred band!—the workman's friend! the workman's hope! composed entirely of workmen, consulting solely for the good of workmen, you have nothing but the interest of workmen at heart. Listen then to the tale of the Co-operator; weigh his arguments; appreciate his feelings; and judge for yourselves whether the system he proposes to you is practicable, feasible, judicious, and likely in any degree to emancipate workmen from the iron grasp—the intolerable thralldom of fluctuating and ruinous wages.

2 A Trade Union is a society of workmen uniting for the purpose of mutual self-protection on the subject of wages. As the object of every merchant and dealer is to sell as dear as possible, so the object of such a union is to sell their labour as dear as possible. This object is partially effected, first by limiting, in various ways, the number of apprentices received into the trade, and by regulations, respecting the mode of employing them; and secondly, by refusing to work under certain prices. The mode of enforcing the latter resolution is, by endeavouring to proportion the number of workmen to the demand for work. This is done by the retirement of some of them when wages have a tendency to fall, who are supported, during this retirement, by a subscription from the rest. On extraordinary occasions, when a great and permanent reduction of wages is apprehended, it is endeavoured to be counteracted by what is called a "strike." All the workmen, employed by a particular individual, retire. The manufactory is shut up: orders are unexecuted. If the manufacturer has a large stock of goods, or an ample capital, the funds which maintain the men become exhausted, and they are obliged to submit. If the master thinks he shall be unable, in the long run, to carry his object, he makes the best terms he can in the beginning.

3. All unions are supported by weekly subscriptions. These are continually accumulating against a strike. When a strike is resolved upon, in any particular place, the subscriptions are increased among the members in other places, for the support of the strikers. A strike is never resolved upon till a fund is in hand, sufficient to last for several months: so that though the men may not ultimately gain their object, the manufacturer runs an imminent risk of being ruined. The master may have spirit enough to devote himself for the good of the trade; or he may think it as well to be ruined, by refusing to comply with the demands made upon him, as by yielding, foreseeing nothing but ruin in the latter case: and in like manner the men may devote themselves to great privations, upon

a general principle, believing that their fellow workmen, and they themselves, ultimately will be benefited by their sacrifices. The whole transaction is one of buying and selling. The master tries to buy labour as cheap as possible, in order to make his profits as large as possible: the workman tries to sell his labour as dear as possible, in order to live as comfortably as possible; and sometimes, because if wages fall, he parts not only with comforts, but even with necessaries.

4. The master dislikes the union of workmen as naturally as he likes his own profit. All masters have a fellow sympathy with each other, and therefore all masters hate unions. Legislators are composed of masters, and therefore they hate them—and thought to carry their point of reducing wages, by enacting laws against unions, *i.e.* by means of the profit upon work, they hired some of the workmen, by giving them better wages, to keep the rest quiet by force, who were paid worse wages. How any workmen could be such fools, to say no worse, as to be bribed thus—to take up arms against their fellows, and even against their very relations and children, who must be workmen in their turn, is passing strange. But at length such laws were considered to be useless, impolitic and wicked, and were accordingly annulled. The progress of knowledge and good principles have brought masters to acknowledge this simple truth, *viz.* that one seller has the same right to make the best of the market as another seller. The workman is a seller of labour, and has a right to sell when he likes, and how he likes: and if a company of workmen choose to unite, to trade in labour, they have as much right to do it as a company of masters to trade in capital.

5. We ought to observe, to prevent misconception, that the case of the individual master is often one of peculiar difficulty and anxiety. Trade has been liable, of late years, to the most extraordinary and sudden revolutions. The care, the thought, the consideration, the judgment required, to conduct a large manufactory—the enormous expenses—the characters of those in whom confidence is placed, are occasions of anxious reflection. A trifling turn of the market may seriously affect a man's capital. Whenever he is threatened by pecuniary losses, his only resource is in diminished wages; and it is possible, that, occasionally, this expedient may be as wise for his men as for himself, as he might otherwise be compelled to discard them entirely. A man, so situated, is more an object of pity than of blame.

6. On the other hand, the principles which drew workmen together, to combine for their mutual security, were among the noblest of which the human heart is susceptible—an honest regard for their own welfare and independence—a kind and generous sympathy in the condition and comforts of their friends and neighbours—a prudent forethought for the future—a magnanimous self-denial, and sacrifice of present comforts—a noble public spirit, expanding and spreading itself over distant individuals, unknown even by name, whose only recommendation was, that they wore the same form and lineaments, carried the same heart in their bosom, were heirs of the same fleshly pangs, and had none to whom to cry for help but their own humble, poor and suffering fellow workmen.

7. The principle of union, to which we so strenuously wish to give a new direction among workmen, is essential to the welfare of man, and the corner stone of civilisation. It was the earnest object of some of the earliest and wisest of the English kings, to encourage it by great privileges. From it arose the genius of arts, trade and commerce. Trade unions of masters were established in most towns, and were universally the parents of prosperity. Probably, at that period, manufactures were a blessing to men as well as

masters. Their interests were more identified. While that period lasted, unions of men, as opposed to masters, must have been unknown. They would arise, naturally and necessarily, as changes took place in trade which affected the comforts of workmen. If the moral situation of the workman altered with his comforts: if he was gradually treated with less regard, and with more selfishness: if the power of producing wealth increased so much that the workman became less valuable: if he began to be considered as a mere machine, differently composed indeed, but still a machine of flesh and blood, instead of wheels and steam, what, under these circumstances, could the workmen do but canvass over, among each other, their present and future prospects, and perceive the opposing interests of themselves and masters?

8. If in seeking a remedy for threatening evils, they adopted the means, then in use among their betters, for attaining any object of ambition, viz. force, ought we to be surprised? In those days, the best argument was found in the best sword, and might made right. Workmen followed the example set them by the upper classes, when fighting was the order of the day; and having resolved to claim a certain rate of wages, the refusal of the master to grant it, was followed by destruction of property. This was the natural course of an ignorant people, with excited passions and a bad example before them.

9. Thus the spirit of union got among the workmen, as it had before possessed the masters. They could only unite among themselves, for they were a distinct—and may we not add, a degraded caste? Why should it be a disgrace to work? to produce all the comforts, wealth, and luxuries of the world? Yet so it was, and so it is. This badge of degradation assisted to unite them—it made them brothers in adversity—they united as brothers, and became so formidable, that the law thought it worth while to attempt to disunite them: the attempt failed—it only bound them faster together—it had a direct contrary effect to what was intended, for it compelled the men to take their measures with greater consideration—it taught them depth of system, and graver forethought—it acted as a school of discipline, and converted them into petty legislators. As the law shifted and modified its enactments, the unions followed; and after many marches and countermarches, legislators became convinced that it was perfectly useless to meddle with the subject.

10. While these measures were carrying on, the hostility of the opposite parties increased. Every new law inflamed the passions of the men—made them discontented, irascible and seditious. A measure of common prudence was made a crime against government. While unions, of all kinds, were encouraged among masters, they were indicted among workmen. Virtue in one case was vice in the other. The great distinction of right and wrong was confounded. Men's understandings were bewildered and outraged: and the workman felt himself an object of injustice, hatred, and tyranny. His spirit rose within him. Violent forces produced violent reaction. The spirit of a free man can never be pacified but upon a principle of freedom. Address him in a tone of insult, or even of command, and he will defy you: but speak to him in the language of sympathy and friendship, and his passions will instantly subside into composure and calmness.

11. Since these laws, which were felt to be partial, unjust and oppressive, were done away with, though the privations of workmen have been increasing, their conduct has been more pacific. They have lost the irritation which was continually galling them, and their minds have partaken of the general improvement of the age. The same progress of knowledge which has enabled the

masters and legislators to acknowledge the rights of the workman, has enabled workmen to respect the rights of masters. When it is asked by sceptics, of what use are education and knowledge to the working classes, one answer is plain—"to open their minds to the commanding voice of right and justice, and to induce them thereby, to respect the property of masters and capitalists, whatever be the extent of their own necessities." Large bodies of workmen have, for some time, been in a state bordering on starvation—so says the public press. In former days, such a state was immediately followed by a riot: but now, passion has given way to reason—ignorance to knowledge—and riot to peace and patience.

12. The working classes are convinced that violence is no remedy. Suppose that machinery could be destroyed, to a considerable extent—suppose that wages were thereby improved, still machinery would soon recover its former position, and low wages would return with it. Machinery is acknowledged to be in itself a good—a great and inestimable one: but in its immediate operation, it is an injury to the workman. He is unwilling to destroy this good if he can avoid it; and the great problem which now occupies his thoughts is, how can I convert this great good to my own advantage? He has not yet found out the answer to this problem, but he soon will—and it lies in one word, Co-operation: but he is earnestly looking for it, and awaits in patience the result of his enquiry.

13. In the next place, workmen are convinced, that the causes which regulate wages, lie beyond the masters themselves, and are to be found in the state of the great market of the world, which the master is to supply. As the world is at present governed, the wants of the world regulate commerce: commerce regulates trade: trade regulates wages. The relation between demand and supply, and not the master, is the true cause of the rate of wages.—The progress of knowledge has enabled the workman to understand this.

14. With this knowledge, the moral and religious character of the working classes has run parallel. They have more correct, we may say more refined notions of right and wrong, and of the responsibilities here and hereafter attached to moral conduct. Practical religion, though still in its infancy, as it ever must be, till Co-operation prevails, has still made progress among the working classes, as we trust it has among all. They therefore act upon these convictions, and they had literally rather starve than plunder.

15. For all these reasons, the working classes are a different race of men from what they were. They possess intelligence, knowledge, and moral and religious principle.—Degraded they may be in the foolish estimate of inconsiderate people: but degraded they are not, and never can be again, in all that constitutes the real worth of man. They are a different race: they claim a different destiny.—A new career is open to them: it is within their reach: they have only to put forth the hand, and it is theirs.

16. Trade unions are the organs of the working classes. What is true of one is true of the other. What is the power of the body, collectively, may easily be brought about by the unions. They have the power and the will, and we have no doubt of their sincerity. When the novelty of the subject is worn off, and they perceive its practicability, they will communicate such an impulse to the whole body, of which they are the head, as must conduct them to a complete emancipation.

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C. AND R. SICKELMORE, PRINTERS, BRIGHTON.

THE CO-OPERATOR.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNION ARE POWER :

POWER, DIRECTED BY KNOWLEDGE, IS HAPPINESS :

HAPPINESS IS THE END OF CREATION.

No. 16. AUGUST 1, 1829.

1d.

TRADE UNIONS.—PART II.

1. We have explained in our last number the nature of those Unions which have taken place among workmen. We shewed how they arose naturally, and were brought about by the change that took place in trade and machinery. We compared them with the Unions which have been established among capitalists. We proved that the motives, objects and principles of both were fundamentally the same; that they were either intended to guard against evils which would be unavoidable without them, or to attain objects of great and paramount importance, which though impossible without them, became easy and certain by such simple means.

2. We pronounced the Trade Unions of the workmen to be legitimate, just and honorable. We palliated any faults which they might have committed, as belonging to the application rather than to the principle itself, as necessarily incidental to all human exertions, and as being eclipsed by the greater faults of similar institutions among capitalists. We lamented that the principle had hitherto never been applied in its most proper and forcible direction; and we concluded by expressing a decided conviction that when so applied, it would be found to triumph over all other principles, and would render Trade Unions omnipotent over the affairs of men.

3. Trade Unions may speedily as well as easily become omnipotent over the affairs of men. Whoever commands labour, commands men. Who can so easily command labour as the labourer himself? The capitalist cannot labour; therefore as soon as the labourer becomes his own capitalist, the mere capitalist will dwindle into insignificance, and the joint-labour capitalist will become omnipotent.

4. Trade Unions have got a machinery. They are regularly organized. They receive weekly subscriptions to an immense amount. This might be called a UNION RENT, applicable to any purposes the Unions may direct it to. The world has lately witnessed the magical effects of such a rent. It has wrung the strongest political measure from the strongest government in the world. If Trade Unions can take a hint from this fact, it is as clear as the sun at noon day, that their measures will be invincible.

5. Trade Unions should continue the same system and organization which they possess at present. The weekly subscriptions should go on, and be invested as they arise, as profitably as may be. In the mean time, the first thing to be done, is to shake hands with the present masters, and make with them perpetual peace. They

should turn their eyes upon a new master, which will be themselves, their capital, and their producing powers.

6. They should send a circular invitation to every UNION in the kingdom, to take into consideration this new subject of Co-operation. What is it? What are its principles? What are its objects? Are they practical or theoretical? Whence did it originate? Among the upper classes, or the working classes? Is it some new scheme for imposing on workmen, and taxing them for the benefit of the capitalist; or is it a scheme, devised, begun and perfected chiefly by the working classes themselves? A thread spun by their own hands, out of their wool, and strong enough to hold all their interests together!

7. The effects of such a circular among the Trade Unions, would not be long concealed. The principles are few and easily understood, and intelligible to the meanest capacity. If the sentiments of the members were favorable to a full Co-operation, as they undoubtedly would be, (for these members are already Co-operating to a certain extent) the next question would be respecting the employment of their present funds, and those which are weekly coming in, in the cause of Co-operation. The present form of Union should remain, and the approving members should form themselves into Co-operative Unions, in addition to those they at present belong to.

8. The present Trade Unions should by no means be broken up yet. The time will come when this may be done, but not till after Co-operation has universally succeeded, and swallowed up every other plan of benefitting the workman, and providing for him in want of employment, sickness and old age. The present Unions should be stepping stones, and nursing fathers to Co-operation. As soon as they understand the subject, they may by their own example, encouragement, and assistance of capital, promote materially the spread of the system. Wherever there is a Union, there will be Co-operation. From these centres, Co-operative missionaries will go forth into neighbouring districts, to invite all able-bodied labourers to accept constant, in exchange for precarious, employment; to live in good houses; to sit down to a full meal every day; and to enjoy a snug warm fireside in winter.

9. Does any one say that such missionaries will not make many converts? If men continue to prefer food to hunger, and certainty to uncertainty, the disciples of such missionaries will be more numerous than ever they have been since the days of the Apostles. Each Union starting with a capital, members may be received, and set to profitable employment immediately. Whoever can produce more than he consumes, (provided he be a good character) will be a worthy member. The present facilities in producing clothing being so great, that the world is already over-stocked, and many powerful machines are standing idle; the production of clothing is reduced to little more than an act of volition; so that, in fact, the mechanical qualification of a member will be brought to the very simple condition of his being able to produce more *food* than he consumes.

10. We are deceived about the food-producing powers of man, by the intricate windings of the road by which food travels from the producer to the consumer, which are occasioned by the producer's producing for another and not for himself: but when the labourer by becoming a capitalist, produces for himself alone, and his food merely travels from his own spade to his own barn, and from thence to his own mouth—two steps instead of two hundred, the art of producing will become so simple that every boy may feed himself.

11. Trade Unions, therefore, will continue to collect their weekly rent as usual, but they will no longer invest it in Savings' Banks,

Government Securities, Mortgages, and such like absurdities. They will invest it in Co-operation; in forming Co-operative Societies among their own members; in lending moderate sums of money to other societies; in forming manufactories of their own, for supplying Co-operative Societies with tools, instruments and machines of various kinds; in giving employment in these manufactories to the most skilful hands; and above all in giving useful employment to those hands which are driven out of different manufactories by the want of demand for goods, and the inability of masters to give employment.

12. One of the most obvious and useful employments for the idle capital of the Trade Unions, would be the purchase of land. And here some most important remarks are to be made. The value of land is to be estimated by totally different considerations; whether it is purchased for the individual capitalist or for the Co-operative capitalist. In the former case, the value of the land depends entirely upon its situation with respect to markets, in the latter, not at all. In the former, almost all the produce must be converted into money before it is of any use—in the latter, not so. In the former, the producer often sells his food and sends it to travel, and buys it again at its journey's end—in the latter, not so, but it makes its two steps only to the consumer's mouth. In the former, lands of the most fertile description lie waste, because they are near no markets—in the latter, fertile land, wherever it is, would be valuable and almost equally so. If the land cannot travel to market to the consumer, the consumer can travel to it. Food is bulky, and a bad traveller,—clothing is easily transported,—machines will live in all climates,—and books, and men of enlightened minds, who are or will be the staple of Co-operation, improve by travelling.

13. Therefore, if Trade Unions were to purchase land at the extremity of the island, they would only have to send their superfluous hands, the discarded weavers, mechanics and agricultural labourers, to occupy this land and to work for themselves, and to consume the whole produce themselves. The best way in which these tenants could remunerate the Unions, would be by receiving from time to time, the superfluous hands. As the produce becomes superabundant, they would give information to the Unions. As men were thus drawn from the general market of labour, wages would rise; the remaining workmen would be better off, and the common object would be more easily, rapidly and completely attained.

14. These Co-operative colonies of the Trade Unions would multiply; districts which would not answer to be cultivated by the individual capitalist, would answer for them. A cordon or string of colonies would be formed at the outskirts as it were of lands, cultivated upon the individual principle; but as these colonies would be sure to increase in wealth, they would also be able to enter into competition with the mere capitalist, and gradually supplant him upon his own soil. On no spot would the individual capitalists be able to compete with Co-operative capital once established, because the very sinews of the individual capitalist, namely—LABOUR, would undoubtedly pass over to the ranks of Co-operation, as soon as the two systems were fairly in sight of each other.

15. We point out the occupation of land under circumstances of this kind, because the provision of food for hundreds of families who are now in a state bordering upon starvation, is the urgent demand of the moment, and the Trade Unions already possess capital enough to commence such a project the very moment that they understand it; but there are many other ways of employing their capital with advantage to themselves, at their own doors,

which would suggest themselves, and vary with the local circumstances of each society.

16. One very obvious and necessary object, which would soon suggest itself to Co-operators, is the formation of Schools for their own children, in order to prepare them for communities at an early age. Co-operation gives to education a new character, for it demands it as a necessary qualification; and it gives a reason for its being carried to the greatest possible extent, which no sophistry can evade or quibble about. They measure each other; they rise and fall together; the perfection of one, is the perfection of the other: they are inseparable allies—each insures and guarantees the success of the other; and when both have learned to take the field together, they will prove invincible and omnipotent.

17. Soon will those societies which are established be able to receive the sons of members and of workmen in general, as apprentices. Trade Unions could not do better than place out the sons of members in such situations, with small premiums. By relieving, in this way, the parents, they would be able to make greater exertions in favor of the grand object of Co-operative capital. By placing their children in Co-operation, they would be making the best investment for themselves against old age and infirmities; for utterly incompatible is the Co-operative spirit, with the want and distress of those to whom we owe all the powers, faculties, and happiness we enjoy.

18. To conclude then, in the words with which we began, "Hail sacred band! the workman's friend! the workman's hope!" These are the means, the methods, and objects, for you to adopt, and not the eternal bickerings with masters about a paltry rate of wages, when you have the power within yourselves of determining, not wages only, but CAPITAL ITSELF. You are now the head of many thousands of workmen and many thousands of pounds. You have it in your power to be at the head of millions—you may become the arbiters of their fate, and may command them more easily than the greatest conquerors have ever done. Like these conquerors in power, you will not be like them in deeds, for your victories will be bloodless. "No cries and groans, and shrieks that rend the air," will follow in your train: but tears of joy, rivers of happiness, sweet waters to refresh the parched palate, food for the hungry, clothing for the naked! "The blessings of the widow, the fatherless and "the orphan, and of him that was ready to perish, shall come upon "you, and every one at your approach shall rise up and call you "blessed!"

Upwards of seventy Co-operative Societies are now in existence. An account of some of them may be seen in the Birmingham Co-operative Herald, published monthly, price one penny, by COWIE and STRANGE.

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THE CO-OPERATOR.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNION ARE POWER :
POWER, DIRECTED BY KNOWLEDGE, IS HAPPINESS :
HAPPINESS IS THE END OF CREATION.

No. 17. SEPTEMBER 1, 1829. 1d.

OVER-POPULATION IS OCCASIONED BY OVER- PRODUCTION.

1. This proposition may appear, at first sight, to be a contradiction. We shall however, endeavour to shew that what is now called over-population, is merely a misapplication and abuse of words—that there is an excess of population only in a particular mercantile, marketable sense, and not in a plain, straight forward, common sense. Over-population, in the abused sense of the word, must always exist in the common form of society : but a real over-population has never existed, except in famines and in the most barbarous state of society, before the invention of useful arts—and never can exist in the Co-operative form of society.

2. The way in which we hear of over-population is, by pauperism and want of employment for the working classes. All the evils and complaints of society press upon them. They are made, as it were, responsible for every thing; and bear all the blame whenever any thing goes wrong. When they are wanted, for labour or for fighting, then they are made much of, and praised to the skies. As soon as they have made the food, clothing, or houses, or beat the enemy, then they are of no farther use—and the state is *over-peopled*.

3. If no man, by labour, could produce more than he consumed, all men must be producers; and then we should not hear of over-population. If one man produces for another, who has the power, from particular circumstances, of making the producer what allowance he pleases, when he gets his stores well supplied, he may fancy that he can, in future, do without the producer; and then he may cry "over-population." The man who receives the produce, might have enough for himself and a servant; and by having had his personal wants of dress, attendance, &c., supplied by the labourer, when the idea of over-population first crosses his mind, he would not think his servant superfluous, but his labourer.

4. So it is with classes of men. The workmen, now, are entirely dependent upon capitalists—who, from peculiar circumstances, may or may not employ the labourer—just as they please. The capitalists produce nothing themselves: they are fed, clothed, and lodged by the working classes. The workmen also support by their produce, not only the capitalists, but a number of attendants besides. Yet, when the capitalist is so situated, that he finds he has taken charge of too many attendants, and is determined to turn off somebody, instead of turning off a servant, and sending him to feed himself by his own labour, he somehow hits upon the workman, and thinks he is the person who over-peoples the earth.

5. Thus the question of over-population always turns back upon the poor workman, who produces daily, not only all that he consumes, but as much more as supports the capitalist and all his train of non-producing servants and dependents. It is evident then, that the fault of over-population does not lie with the producer, i.e. the workman, but with the consuming non-producer.

6. In the present form of society, the workmen are entirely in the power of the capitalists, who are incessantly playing at what is called *profit and loss*—and the workmen are the counters, which are pitched backwards and forwards with this unfortunate difference—that the counters do not eat and drink as workmen do, and therefore don't mind being thrown aside at the end of the game. The game could not be played without the counters; and capitalists could not play at profit and loss without the workmen. But the workmen are as much in the power of the capitalists, as the counters are in that of the players; and if the capitalists do not want them, they must go to the wall.

7. There never was any cry, among workmen, of over-population—and it would be surprising if there were, seeing that they produce more than they consume. If one man produces a surplus, ten men would produce ten times that surplus—and a million would produce a million surpluses. Such men could never dream of over-population. Give a body of workmen a piece of land, of their own, and make it imperative upon all to work, they would, daily, produce a surplus: they could not consume all their produce; and we should never hear of over-population. That word might then be struck out of the dictionary.

8. The working classes of England, possess, at the present moment, capital enough, in the Benefit Societies and Trade Unions, to purchase laud enough to maintain, if not all of them, yet so large a portion as would at once place the subsistence of all, upon a prosperous footing: but instead of investing their capital in land, and so producing plenty of necessaries, i.e. food, clothing, and houses, for themselves, and accumulating a common capital at the rapid rate which improved arts and machinery would allow of, they actually put all their capital into the hands of their natural enemies—the capitalists, who, with this capital, immediately cry “over-population.” Upon the capitalists hang, not only the servants, clerks, and other members of their establishments, but all the writing trade, as well as the real men of science—all those who think it easier or more honorable to hold a pen than a spade; and even these people join in the general cry of “over-population,” and agree, perhaps, in only that one thing—of laying the blame upon the poor workman.

9. Thus, by the absurd way in which the working classes have hitherto invested their capital, they have not only benefited the capitalists, as was shewn in the reflections under the head of Benefit Societies—they have not only, with the greatest civility, been content with three, four, or five per cent. upon their capital, and made the capitalist a present of the remainder, however great—nay, and worked it out themselves, besides, but they have actually, as it were, purchased with it, this cry of “over-population,” which, as applicable to the working classes—as being unable to produce what they consume, is one of the most absurd unproveable cries that ever was raised.

10. In a country parish, you may find perhaps all, or a great part of the labourers, receiving part of their support in the shape of poor rates. This is called “over-population”—i.e. say the wise ones, “these labourers consume more than they produce.” Yet, all the land in the parish, is cultivated by these same labourers—and out of this produce, are supported all the mechanics, and their children—all the farmers, and their children and servants—all the gentlemen with their establishments in town and country, and their children—some, it may be travelling in foreign parts—besides paying all the government taxes. In what sense then, can it be said, that there is an over-population of labourers? Certainly in any sense but that of common sense. It is possible there may be an over-population of servants, managing people, head men, stewards, bailiffs, double and triple establishments—but of producers, of

working-men, there cannot, in the nature of things, be an over-population for ages to come.

11. As there is, perhaps, no parish in England without paupers, and as the wages or parish allowance are only sufficient to feed a man from day to day, so there are labourers so degraded by the circumstances around them, as to have sunk very innocently into a class called roundsmen. These poor creatures travel round from door to door, with all the elements of wealth about them—able and willing to produce more than they consume—and probably, having always done so, only that the produce has run away from them, as already described: but, instead of hearing words of mildness and encouragement, they hear no sounds but that of “over-population.” This is the picture of an English country parish, during many months in the year—particularly in the winter. Then it is that the cry is the loudest: but lo! and behold! when summer comes, and the produce of these labourers and roundsmen is to be collected, and the yellow harvest to be housed, the cry is suddenly changed into that of “under-population.” Messengers are despatched into the highways and byeways for labourers; servants and bailiffs turn out; even beggars are pressed into the service; no questions are asked; even character is put in the background; every body is industrious—well fed, and happy; and the only cry is, “the more the merrier.”

12. As the substantial *game* of capital is put under cover, this merry cry grows fainter and fainter. Questions begin to be asked, who is who? and what is what? The capitalist has completed his annual bargain with the labourers, roundsmen, and beggars: he has got possession of all the food: and after a few hearty meals, and the prospect of many more, begins his old song of “over-population.” This cry then, is raised by the capitalist, when his barns and warehouses are full. The fuller they are, the less he needs the labourer. He is grieved to see the labourer turned consumer. This is his own trade. “Two of a trade can never agree.” He doles out his food with a grudging hand and rueful countenance. He compares his plentiful store with his now useless roundsman, till at last, out it comes—“over-population!” If this cry is not occasioned by well-filled granaries—by an immense surplus produce, at the command of the capitalist, and which the producer has no right to touch, there is no such thing as cause and effect.

13. This is an important and vital truth for Co-operators. There is no over-population properly so called: there never can be any in a Co-operative community, once established upon their own capital. The cry is raised by the capitalist and the non-producer, owing to the peculiar way in which the labourer is supported. It varies according to the season of the year—being loudest in winter, when food is most abundant, and weakest in summer, when the old food is almost exhausted and the fresh supply is not quite secured. The producer might well be allowed a larger share during the idle season, as is the custom in some parts of the Netherlands and Italy—where he lives at the farmer’s table all the year round. Such also was the custom in England, when agricultural labourers lived, many of them, in the farmer’s house, and shared his fare: but customs have changed: “intellect has marched.” Cultivators have got into the manufacturing system—of turning the penny, and considering the labourer as a machine, to be valued merely on the score of profit and loss, and not as a human being—a moral and intellectual agent—and above all, a religious and responsible creature—nay, even “a child of God”—to use an authoritative and true phrase, who shall, one day, sit before the Almighty’s throne, in as good a seat as the richest and proudest capitalist in the world.

14. The cry of over-population therefore, arises out of this simple fact—that the productive powers of labour are so much increased, that a smaller proportion of workmen than formerly, is sufficient for feeding and clothing the capitalists. The number of workmen

cannot be diminished, at pleasure, in the same proportion, as the productive power of machinery increases—and therefore the number, not actually wanted, are thrown upon the capitalist, as a drug. The capitalist cannot employ them as servants, for his income is insufficient: he cannot employ them as workmen, because profits have ceased, or nearly so, by over-production. When the wants of the whole world have been supplied, profit must cease. That state, though it has not been quite reached, has been closely approached, by the enormous increase of productive power, sufficient to affect profit, and throw large bodies of men out of employment. Therefore over-population is occasioned by want of employment—want of employment, by want of profit—want of profit, by want of demand—want of demand, by over-production—and therefore over-population, by over-production.

15. This is a singular state of things to look at—that men should be perishing in the midst of abundance, and that mankind should be thought too numerous just when it is proved that their wants may be supplied to an unlimited extent. The situation of society, is such, in productive power, that the workman might well labour a little less, and study a little more—and become a being of a higher grade: but this view has never been taken, nor is it likely to be taken. The principles of capital and labour, and of masters and servants, are diametrically opposed. The question between capital and labour, is one of profit. Labour must necessarily be bought as cheap as possible; and machinery, as before proved, reduces this price to a minimum. So the question between master and servant is, and must be, in the present form of society, one of “order and obey.” A master may treat his servant kindly: but he may treat him as a servant; and keep him in his place. Some few servants are elevated, and made confidential: but as a class, they must for ever remain badly educated—ignorant—degraded; and liable to end their days in want and poverty.

16. There was a time, in England, when a decent provision for an old and faithful servant, was a pleasing duty: but that time has also “marched” away. The memory of by-gone services, is obliterated; and the wrinkled brow has less charms than the profitable manliness of youth. The parish door hides all deformities, and satisfies all our ideas of virtuous sympathy.

17. But, inasmuch as all these evils arise from over-production, not over-population—and from the entire dependence of labour upon capital; and as the capitalist will never give such a share of food and instruction to the workman as to raise his situation—and is moreover ashamed to labour himself, and to turn workman, the remedy must be sought for from its proper source—and the workman must turn capitalist. Then, all the causes of the present cry of over-population, will be so many reasons for his success. The very causes which have occasioned his present want and misery, will as infallibly ensure his future prosperity and happiness. Facility of production will enable him to improve his mind, as well as to labour. Improved methods of instruction will give him useful knowledge, in a shorter space of time. Property and knowledge will make him respectable and virtuous. Want and crime will flee away together, as the shadow follows its substance.

18. Who, that loves his country and his kind, would not rejoice to see the peasantry of England so redeemed from want, crime, and misery—so raised to manly and virtuous independence? and this change taking place quietly and effectually, and without injustice to any one? In vain then, would thunders, human or divine, roll above our heads—for the former would meet a conducting rod, to dissipate their baneful effects, and the latter would only burst in fertilizing showers, in proof that such a change was the work of the divine Hand, and sanctioned by the divine Fiat.

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THE CO-OPERATOR.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNION ARE POWER :

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HAPPINESS IS THE END OF CREATION.

No. 18. OCTOBER 1, 1829.

1d.

THE TWO REMEDIES.

1. We have brought before our readers the subject of over-population, and have taken a view of it, different from that of many of our contemporaries. The broad fact, that many of the working classes are in a state of extreme distress, is admitted by all parties; the precise cause of that distress is disputed, and therefore the remedy also.

2. We have endeavoured to distinguish between the demand and supply of labour in the market of capital, and the demand and supply of labour when the labourer has a capital of his own to work upon. In the former case, we are ready to admit that there may be, as there is at present, a surplus of labour, which is falsely called over-population. In the latter case, we do not see how there can be an over-population, that is, too much labour; that is, too much production; that is, too much food, clothing and houses.

3. There are persons, however, who think there can be no system but the present system; that labour, and therefore, the labourer, can never be any thing better than a marketable commodity, to be bought and sold by capitalists, like a log of wood, a hat, or a pig. When hats and labour are cheap, there is an over-population of hats and workmen—when they are dear there is an under-population.

4. According to this rule, they very naturally infer that hats and workmen should be manufactured upon the same principle. When hats and workmen are plentiful, the manufactories should be closed for a few years or so; when scarce, they should be opened again. They would invent something like a gauge for both these commodities, in the market price of each. When hats and workmen are below a certain price, they advise that production should cease; when it rises above this, they advise that production should commence.

5. This advice is given in sober seriousness, or sadness, and this is the remedy, and the only remedy, they have to propose. With respect to hats, the advice is sound, and whether given or not the rule will be strictly followed: hats will be made or not, just as the capitalist can get a profit or not; and supposing too many to come from the warehouse, the public will not be oppressed with their cries. But here, the rule stops, and it is difficult to conceive how any one should seriously apply it to the workman. "The workman has the market of labour entirely in his own hands; he has only to marry with prudence and foresight, and he may keep the rate of wages at any height which he pleases."

6. The workman is classed with hats, and then it is demanded of him to have prudence and foresight. Why not preach prudence to the hat, as well as the workman, if their cases are so much alike? Or, why treat the workman with the same severity as the hat, if their cases are so totally dissimilar?

7. We claim for the workman the rights of a rational and moral agent—a being capable of acquiring knowledge and virtue, if properly educated; the being whose exertions produce all the wealth of the world—we claim for him the rights of a man, and deprecate the philosophy which would make him an article of mere merchandise, to be bought and sold, multiplied or diminished, by no other rules than those which serve to decide the manufacture of a hat.

8. In laying down rules on practical subjects, there ought to be something like practical probability in the rule, otherwise, it is in vain to declaim, and people only talk to the winds. "If workmen would marry prudently, (it is said) there would be no over-population." They might as well say, if workmen were angels there would be no over-population. The one is as likely to happen (in the philosophical sense) as the other. How are workmen to have this prudence? It is not innate, or an instinct, for the instinct is just the reverse. Prudence is the virtue of a superior mind, instilled into it and nurtured by a judicious educator, and perfected by experience and habit. But those who recommend this prudence are among the last persons to provide this "judicious educator," and assert rather that the workman should not be educated at all, that is, in plain words, should not be taught this prudence; for education is, or ought to be, nothing else than the inculcation of valuable moral habits.

9. But the best education in the world could do nothing in the case. Times are altered—the world is altered—mankind are altered. Instead of a few straggling inhabitants, wandering on the sea-shore to starve on limpets, men are become numerous, luxurious, and wonderfully intelligent; measuring the heavens by their knowledge. Instead of grovelling before a block of wood, men are become worshippers of a "living and true god," who has imparted to them a ray of his own intelligence and immortality. Instead of being covered rather than clothed, with the skin of a wild animal, they wear the most ingenious fabrics; and instead of the simple distaff and laborious knitting pin, they have machines of such gigantic power, that they can at any moment over stock the wants of man and produce an over-population.

10. It is this fact, which sets the old theory of population at defiance. "It is asserted that prudent marriages (by which is meant no marriages at all) are necessary, because population increases faster than the means of subsistence," that is, faster than clothes can be made. As well might men look at the sun till blind, and assert that it did not shine. When we see the power of hundreds of horses concentrated in a single machine—when we see thousands of spindles worked by a few individuals—how is it possible to deduce the conclusion, that men increase faster than cloth, hats and stockings? The natives of India can supply their countrymen with clothing. The natives of England can bring cotton from India, make it into cloth, return it to India, and undersell the inhabitants. "Therefore, (say the theorists) men increase faster than cloth."

11. If any thing is evident from this argument, it is that the evil is not over-population, and want of prudence on the part of the workman: but the power of over-production, on the part of the capitalist, and an ignorance how to apply that power to the improvement of mankind. When it is said, "the workmen have the power of regulating their own numbers," it might be replied,

“the capitalists have the power of supplying the wants of those numbers.” The capitalists, in their machinery, possess the power of production; and in their education, the power of making proper arrangements. To them we ought to look for new systems of management, to meet the new system of power. It is in vain to talk to workmen of prudence, if we may not talk to masters of intelligence and common sense. If much is expected from any man, much should be done for him. If the workman is to be prudent and wise, he must be taught prudence and wisdom.

12. But let us look again at the practical wisdom of this rule of prudence. It is given to the workman as advice; but, the advice is written in books which the workman never reads, and addressed to multitudes of men who cannot read. The closet philosopher has discovered a golden rule—instead of “be fruitful and multiply,” he proclaims, “be prudent and multiply not.” He then thunders against the stupidity of workmen who do not follow advice they never hear, nor grow wise by books they never can read.

13. Suppose such an impossible event to happen, as, that workmen, brought up as they are now, in stupid ignorance, should catch some glimpse of this golden rule of prudence, how shall they perform the next impossible part of the advice to agree among themselves, how and when, and where marriage shall take place? Shall it be done by a general council of workmen, which, perchance, shall be prosecuted for combination or seditious practices; or, shall it be done by a general tacit consent of workmen, operating by a blind instinct, but yet safely and surely, as the instinct of other animals? Surely all this is too much for sober reason to expect, and the moral part of this problem is as difficult of solution as the mechanical part. If society is not to be improved till the working classes, falling in with the present system, set about measuring their numbers against machinery, and proportion the supply of men to the demand, we may safely pronounce the moral improvement of mankind to be impossible. Then will the world daily present a more and more extraordinary spectacle, that, in proportion as the power of increasing the comforts, virtue and happiness of men, increases, these very fruits of power will diminish, and vice and misery will abound.


14. Impossible, indeed, is such an issue, in the works of an omnipotent power and an infinite wisdom, equal to all emergencies, and baffled by no difficulties. Difficulties, indeed, only prove the breaking up of one system and the commencement of another. Man struggles to relieve himself from the passing load of the day, whatever it may be, and to try new paths to those bright regions of eternal sunshine and perpetual plenty, which we feel a secret conviction are destined to cover the earth, not, perhaps in our age, but in that of our happier posterity.

15. The path which we at present think to explore, is that of Co-operation. The remedy which we propose for the over-population difficulty, is Co-operation: not the immediate and general adoption of a new order of things, foreign to the ideas and habits of a race of beings, the very law of whose existence is HABIT; but, the slow and gradual formation of small societies of the more intelligent workmen, laying aside their antipathies and animosities, and uniting their labour for a common good, attainable by union alone. These societies may daily acquire experience and knowledge. They will see and understand the various operations of business, the nature of markets, the relation of supply and demand, the use of capital—its absolute necessity, and the most practical methods of applying it. In this employment they will be elevated from the class of mere workmen to that of masters and capitalists. Small concerns will suit their small experience. As their business


increases their experience will follow and enlarge. They will add one article of business to another, and one idea to another, till they may assume a confidence, which will naturally result from their new subjects of mental occupation.

16. Should such societies spread and grow up—should this experiment as it may now be called, succeed—we look for checks to an improvident population, which do not and cannot exist at present. It is something wonderful, that, the law which protects the improvident workman should not also protect the innocent capitalist; that while it compels the capitalist to maintain a pauper, it does not compel the pauper to conform to some rules for the public good. If imprudent marriages are so evil in the eye of the law, some regulations should be laid down for them, and we should not be shocked with the folly of marriages at sixteen and paupers at eighteen. But no such compensation law exists; and while improvident marriages are deemed the curse of society, no regulations have ever been even proposed respecting them. But, if Co-operative Societies should spread among workmen, a higher tone of feeling will spread with them—a higher cultivation of mind, and a more enlightened moral principle. As these qualities form the true prudential check in the present state of society, so will they form a similar check in the co-operative state. If any difficulty should then arise on the subject of food (which is not likely), then will be reflection at hand, with self-restraint, a higher sense of propriety and other kindred virtues, to assist. Such a society might impose rules upon itself, as has been practically done at Mr. Rapp's Colony, at Harmony; and would altogether present a scene of moral principles, totally different from any which can possibly exist in the present state of society; where the pauper is born, bred and educated like an animal, and then expected to demean himself like a man.

17. This is the remedy which we propose. A remedy, not in the nature of things, impossible, like the other; but, one, whose elements are to be found among well educated people, under the present system. We would take those elements from the heterogeneous mass by which they are surrounded, and combine them with new forms. They would act with the same certainty then as they do at present, while they would not be counteracted by opposing forces. A public sentiment and public opinion would spring up in those societies as at present, but tenfold more efficient in its influence over the members; and, human nature would then (if ever) start into true life, and prove itself capable of being governed by rational and virtuous principles.



The number of Co-operative Societies is upwards of Seventy, and continues to increase.



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THE CO-OPERATOR.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNION ARE POWER :

POWER, DIRECTED BY KNOWLEDGE, IS HAPPINESS :

HAPPINESS IS THE END OF CREATION.

No. 19. NOVEMBER 1, 1829.

1d.

THE INDIVIDUAL SYSTEM.

1 Since the subject of Co-operation has been under discussion of late years, with a view to render it one of practical operation, and as the means and the only means of insuring the comfort of the working classes, some term has been found convenient to express that form of society which has hitherto prevailed generally in the world, which, therefore, it has been agreed to call the Individual System.

2. In the Individual System, each man acts for himself alone. Individual power, wealth, learning, fame, are aspired to by the mass of mankind, according to their various talents and opportunities; and the means by which these are pursued, are right or wrong, honorable or dishonorable, virtuous or criminal, according to the moral character of each individual. According to this system, there is a strong tendency for power, wealth, and even for learning and science—to accumulate in a few hands, while mankind at large, are weak, poor, ignorant, and in a word, barbarous.

3. This system, is necessarily a mixture of extremes, as to power, wealth, and poverty; despotism in some, slavery in others, are almost inseparable from it. That learning which exists in such a state of society, is in like manner extremely liable to monopoly. Privilege and caste divide the world into classes: each class is separated from the others by the individual principle, while within each class, the same principle divides the members as much from each other, as if they belonged to a different rank; thus also, a principle of competition is established, each man considering his neighbour as a rival, who stands in the way of his own prosperity, and whom he must by every means in his power out-strip or supplant.

4. Excessive competition is so essential to this system, that it is the grand motive inculcated upon every child from its birth; high or low, rich or poor, all are stimulated from the cradle, in all their childish pastimes, and in all their elementary education, to aim only at one object, which is to get above a neighbour. A comparison is drawn, not between the pupil and the subject, but between one pupil and another. A boy is not simply to acquire knowledge, but to know more than another; not to select the most useful studies, but to excel in those which are most in vogue; not to hold correct opinions, but to defend those that are held; not to search for truth, but to bow to authority.

5. Whatever objections there may be to such a state of society, theoretically viewed—whatever abuses it may be liable to—whatever miseries it may be connected with—yet it is a system unavoidable.

able in the infancy of the world; it has been invented by no set of artful men, but is the growth of nature herself; the injuries, crimes, and miseries of which it is accused, are the abuses, and not the essence of the system; and though a severe parent, it is still the parent of the most momentous blessings to the world at large.

6. The Individual System, results necessarily and unavoidably among a set of beings, gifted with high and noble faculties, born in a state of entire ignorance, and compelled to support life by daily labour. Inequality of faculties, character and circumstances, must immediately give rise to inequality of rank and division of labour; and hence, the origin of arts and sciences, and the ultimate regeneration and happiness of the whole race. Had mankind remained perfectly equal, they would for ever have remained ignorant and barbarous. Their boasted equality would have been an equality of degradation, of mere animal life, beyond which they never would have advanced. The very mode in which beings are introduced into the world, the relation of old and young, of parent and child, at once destroys all trace of equality. The simple, yet important fact, that knowledge is acquired, not innate—that knowledge is the result of experience and time—that it generally grows with our growth—this simple fact proclaims at once two momentous truths, that rank is unequal and that man is progressive.

7. It is true, that the mere labourer is a man of few ideas, of narrow mind, of low desires; but, his incessant labour gives leisure to others, that leisure gives rise to reflexion (properly so called), to knowledge of all kinds, to arts and sciences. The mind of man is enabled to unfold itself; the nature and qualities of its powers are tried and proved; and a new world, totally different from that with which his daily wants are connected, begins to be entered upon. The world of mind, of intellectual power, of spiritual refinement, of moral perfection, would never have been known to man, without inequality of rank and without the Individual System.

8. That principle in man, by which one so readily falls under the influence of another; by which whole tribes and nations are induced to look up to one individual, a creature in every respect like themselves, with a degree of awe and veneration, approaching to religious homage, and which makes it even a duty to consider him as the absolute master of their lives and property; this very principle, acting under different modifications, is also the parent of civilization, and of the progressive improvement of man.

9. In the Individual System, as all power emanates from one to many, so all knowledge follows the same direction. The course, indeed, of knowledge is more especially confined to that one direction. Knowledge being progressive, must necessarily be an object of discovery and invention. Some one individual must first be the happy person to become acquainted with a new fact and a new truth; from him it must be communicated to others, who become the instruments of handing it on still farther, till it descends to the lowest of mankind. So one country shall attain a superior degree of light and knowledge to other nations, and be the means of illuminating those that sit in ignorance and darkness.

10. Those who have paid much attention to knowledge, and have self-reflexion enough to watch the progress of their own minds, are best able to judge of the extreme slowness, with which the first steps are made in the cultivation of the faculties, and the first grains picked up upon the golden mountain of knowledge. They also must see the extreme importance of assistance at the outset; when artificial signs come to be studied instead of things themselves; and the obscure and often absurd records of men, are to be compared with facts and things, and to be received or rejected, by the principles of eternal truth.

11. The first steps in knowledge are indeed extremely difficult and laborious, and require exclusive leisure of time, as well as a mind of a peculiar turn. Thus, in the early period of the world, ages might roll away before the leisure of the division of ranks could give birth to any thing deserving the name of knowledge or science. The wonder is, not that man has not achieved more, but rather that he was able to achieve so much, under such disadvantages.

12. The Individual System, therefore, seems to have been absolutely necessary for the birth of arts and sciences, because absolutely necessary for the leisure required. Nor when power was thus accumulated in the hands of a few, are we to conclude that the few would necessarily misdirect it. History, indeed, teems with the deeds of power, often employed in a questionable shape: but, that the possessors of power entered into a tacit combination against the happiness of the world, is not the lesson of history.

13. We should rather say, that the exertions of power have on the whole been eminently beneficial to the race, and that its benefits are still only in their infancy. Arts and sciences were as essential for the purposes of power, as for the common comforts of man. Men of science, knowledge and learning, were the right hand of power; by them only could plans of self-defence or of enterprize, or of domestic and national grandeur, be conceived and executed. Therefore, schools and colleges, and scientific institutions, were among the early objects of wealthy kings. The necessity of leisure for study, shut out all idea that universal knowledge was a thing practicable or desirable; but, compared with the state of the world, very extensive schools were formed for the dissemination of that knowledge which was known or deemed desirable. We must not judge the measures of olden times by rules derived from a new state of the world: it is sufficient for their credit and glory, that they faithfully served the system to which they belonged, and the only system for which the world was fitted.

14. We have thus shewn the necessity of the Individual System for the well being of mankind in their infancy. But, if any should exaggerate its evils and miseries, by singling out the abuses and not the essence of it, we would farther remark, that if any set of men have a violent protest to enter against it, they have only themselves to blame for any evils they may complain of. Every man, who comes into the world before he has done any thing for society, has had much done for him. He has been fed, clothed, and educated, at the expense of Society—which therefore owes him nothing. The debt is all on his side. He cannot claim a capital he has not produced. When he begins to labour, he must labour some time before he can repay the expense of his previous support. If, after this, he complains of the remuneration of labour in the shape of wages, as being only a portion of the produce instead of the whole—in short, if he prefers the Co-operative to the Individual System, he has full liberty to enter it. There is no law, or authority, against it. As it is optional, so it is free; and wants only the Co-operative spirit to render it successful.

15. In fact, independent of all other considerations, the Individual System may very well be considered as a system forced on the possessors of power, by the ignorance and consequent perverseness of mankind, and their want of the true co-operative principle of mutual love. Whatever may be thought of individual possessors of power, there can be no doubt that the great end of government is the protection of property. If there is none but individual property, government must protect that. As common property starts up in the shape of partnerships, corporations, companies, benefit societies, government protects that, and co-operative

societies will have their property protected in the same manner. Co-operation is a voluntary act, and all the power in the world cannot make it compulsory; nor is it desirable that it should depend upon any power but its own. For, if Co-operation (as seems likely) be the form which the greater part of the world is destined to assume, the interference of governments would only cramp its energies and misdirect them.

16. We have thus endeavoured to explain the nature and merits of the two systems, and their adaptation to different ages of the world, and different states of knowledge, and of the arts. The Individual System was admirably adapted to the infancy of society; and the high stimulus which it held out to the exertions of individuals in every direction, was so much bounty upon the production of knowledge. Knowledge would have required a much greater length of time for its perfection, had it not been forced forward in this hot-bed of zeal and ambition; if, indeed, it could ever have grown at all.

17. But the time has now arrived when the labourer may begin to reap the fruit which has been ripening under the Individual System. Knowledge, which was formerly confined to a few closets, is now in every body's hands. The methods of acquiring that knowledge, which were formerly long, irksome and laborious, are now short, pleasant and easy. Ten years of study are now reduced to one. Even the use of books is now better understood—that they are aids to knowledge, and not substitutes for it. Machinery has reached that state, when it dispenses with a great portion of the labourer's time—and the labourer begins to understand, that what is powerful as an enemy, must be equally powerful as a friend. The workman has also acquired a power of reflexion, and a freedom from passion, which formerly disturbed his movements: in short, he has acquired all the elements of Co-operation, and wants only to be habituated to the practice of it. Time and experience are as necessary for Co-operation as for other institutions: many mistakes may be expected to be made—some failures may happen, from ignorance and inexperience; but, even these will be productive of good, and great teachers of true principles; till, at last, all rocks being clearly pointed out, Co-operation will hold on its course to the end of time.



*The number of Co-operative Societies now formed is upwards of
One Hundred and Twenty.*



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THE CO-OPERATOR.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNION ARE POWER :

POWER, DIRECTED BY KNOWLEDGE, IS HAPPINESS :

HAPPINESS IS THE END OF CREATION.

No. 20. DECEMBER 1, 1829.

1d.

THE INDIVIDUAL SYSTEM.—COMPETITION.

1. In pursuing our enquiries on our general subject, we thought proper, in our last number, to take some notice of what has been called the *Individual System*, as opposed, in a certain sense, to the Co-operative. It is the more necessary to do this, because the subject is liable to be misunderstood both by friends and foes. The former being enamoured with a prospect which a warm imagination presents, as abounding in peace and plenty, virtue and happiness, hastily concludes, that the Individual System is a combination of those, in whose hands power is at present lodged against this system of fancied perfection. The latter following too closely and servilely, in a beaten track, more fearful of losing present comforts than hopeful of increasing them—too much wrapped up in the idea of self—too little warmed by the glow of a generous philanthropy—and too sceptical of the resources and magnificent indications of nature and providence, consider any amelioration, in the state of mankind, as an impossibility—and any attempt at bringing it about, as visionary fanaticism, and dangerous innovation.

2. Both these extremes we would endeavour to avoid. We would not brand the Individual System as such, with abusive and injurious epithets, which serve only to inflame the passions and cloud the reason—under which all improvement is hopeless; far less would we limit and libel the course of nature, by pronouncing her plans as consummated in the triumph of vice and misery—and thus give a sanction to a cold and heartless scepticism in high places, which first pronounces mankind to be incapable of improvement, and then proceeds to prevent it, as if to establish its own consistency.

3. Let us then, in the pursuit of our argument, take some notice of the principle of Competition, which belongs to the Individual System—which is represented in such dreadful colours by some writers in favour of co-operation, as the fertile cause of the distresses of the working classes—and as a mark of a malignant character, inherent in those who live by the practice of it. In doing this, we shall have occasion to shew the nature and value of the principle itself—and remove the odium, which, by some, is supposed to be attached to those who have hitherto been influenced by it.

4. We may observe in passing that, there are two kinds of Competition: one, the competition of buyers—the other, that of sellers. In the usual state of markets, when the demand and supply are steadily equal to each other, Competition is hardly noticed. It

begins to be heard of when the equilibrium is disturbed, and the one rises very much above the other. It is said, that after the ravages of the plague of London, the supply of labour was so scanty, and the wages rose so high, that regulations were made to compel the workmen to sell their labour at a lower rate than the market price. There was then a Competition among the capitalists, to see who would buy labour at the highest price.

5. The Competition, however, which is so much complained of in the present day, is just the reverse of this. The supply of labour is greater than the demand; and the labourers compete with each other to undersell each other in point of wages. Again, the productive powers of capital having enormously increased, there is a greater supply of manufactures than the market requires; and the capitalists therefore compete with each other in endeavouring to sell at the lowest rate possible. The capitalists, by competing against each other, do not get a sufficient return to employ their workmen; and the workmen, by competing with each other, lower their wages—and do not get enough to supply the comforts of life. By this double Competition, the price of goods, the profits of trade, and the wages of labour, are all reduced to a minimum.

6. What this minimum is, is not of so much consequence to the capitalist—because the comforts and enjoyments of life, will still remain to him. But the case is far different to the workman, who has no capital to fall back upon; and accordingly his state is best described, by the public papers and parliamentary reports, on the increase of pauperism and crime—the awful distress which pervades many parts of the kingdom—and the anxious solicitude of all men, of all parties, to discover some remedy for what may be termed a national calamity.

7. As the low price of manufactures, and the competition among manufacturers is the apparent immediate cause of this misery, it is no wonder that it should have been seized upon by some writers, and denounced with all the severity which the evils complained of, seem to justify. Here, however, they have fixed upon the wrong principle—and are attempting to apply a remedy at a wrong point, where none can be found; and a little consideration will convince us, that the Competitive principle, which is inseparable from human nature, has been, up to the present moment, one of the greatest benefactors of the world—and even in a Co-operative state of society, must still exist in a modified form, in order that the different societies may avail themselves, fully, of all their resources.

8. The principle of Competition begins to act the moment that two persons exercise the same trade. Each will endeavour to produce as much as possible, in order to increase his property; and should both be offering their produce at the same market, each will endeavour to sell at a lower rate—provided he can still obtain a tolerable profit. This Competition, however, can only be carried to a certain point—because there will arise some understanding between the parties, that they shall not compete to each other's ruin. However, to whatever degree this Competition is carried, though it may lower the profits of the dealers, it is necessarily beneficial to society at large, by increasing their comforts at the same price: so that every improvement in the arts, giving rise to cheaper production, gives rise also to competition among the dealers; and enables private individuals to purchase a greater number of enjoyments by means of the same income.

9. The beneficial effect of Competition descends even to the workman. Clothing, more particularly, comes to him cheaper and cheaper, as Competition extends. If his wages were to remain stationary, while arts improved and competition among dealers increased, he would receive nothing but unmingled benefit from the

principle. Then, indeed, his language would be that of praise and exultation; and he would view, with delight, the plentiful bales of goods exposed to sale and cheapened from day to day, in order to force them into the market.

10. But there comes a time, in the improvement of machinery, when the quantity of goods, which the market requires, can be manufactured by machines—which require fewer hands to serve them. Some workmen are therefore dismissed, and then the cheapness of goods ceases to be a benefit to them—for they have no wages to purchase with. Or, if instead of dismissing some men, the master reduces the wages of all, the cheapness of goods is then of less value to them. The operation of such causes may be trifling and slow at first, and therefore unnoticed: but should it proceed far, it may be felt generally among the workmen. The price of labour may fall faster than the price of food and clothing; and then the abundance of production, the perfection of machinery, and the competition among capitalists, may become a curse to the working classes—may deprive them of work, and therefore of food—may reduce them to starve, in the midst of plenty: hunger and desperation may make them reckless of consequences, since death stares them in the face, whichever way they turn—and the most terrible crimes and convulsions might be the consequence.

11. This is the state, at which the question has now arrived. Wages have fallen faster than the price of food and clothing. Competition has necessarily kept even pace with the fall of price; and the workman is reduced to the most abject want. Still, it is too late to complain of a principle which was formerly encouraged with a bounty; and it is bad philosophy to be unable to find out the wisdom of the essential principles of human nature. It is useless to complain of circumstances which it is impossible to alter, even if they were bad. It is more satisfactory to endeavour to discover new methods of attaining the object which all good men wish for—the improvement, virtue, and happiness of the working classes.

12. This is, indeed, the object which the friends of Co-operation have practically in view. They wish to turn this excessive competition and this perfection of machinery, to the benefit of the working classes. They propose not merely that they should commence capitalists, which they have already done in Benefit Societies and Savings Banks—but that they should, moreover, learn to manage the capital themselves, either in trade or manufactures—and so enjoy the profit of the capital as well as the interest of it—and be employed, likewise, upon their own capital, instead of seeing others employed upon it. When this is the case—when Co-operators have saved and accumulated a certain quantity of capital of their own, they will then go into the market of the competing capitalists, with ten-fold advantage. The more competition the better: for the more will prices fall, and the more will co-operators be supplied. The labour of Co-operators can never deteriorate, when employed for themselves. The same quantity of human labour, instead of producing less and less food and clothing, will, by the aid of machinery, produce more and more food and clothing: because it is nothing but the labour of man, aided by machinery, which enables so large a portion of society to live without labour altogether—and which has been the cause why the whole world has been continually increasing in wealth, riches, and the number of its inhabitants.

13. Let not, therefore, the friends of Co-operation, be either alarmed or irritated at this stalking Colossus—Competition, which now tramples down the working classes: he is but the forerunner of better things—the herald of a new system, proclaiming liberty to the captive. He is but a friend in disguise. He will soon assume

an attitude propitious to their interests. He will spread his arms wide for their protection. He will scatter peace and plenty over their own humble tenements.

14. For the present, let Co-operators compete with each other, in zealous devotion, to the cause they are engaged in—in understanding, thoroughly, the principles it depends upon—in explaining those principles to their friends and neighbours—in increasing, as far as in them lies, the number of members—in the punctual payment of subscriptions—in punctual attendance at the meetings—in spending every penny at some co-operative shop—in purchasing, as much as possible, co-operative manufactures, which have already begun to come to market—in urging their friends to deal in the same manner: this is the kind of Competition upon which their prosperity depends; which cannot possibly be carried to an extreme—and which, if exerted to the utmost, would infallibly secure a speedy independence.

15. But, above all things, and beyond even these points, let Co-operators compete with each other in the improvement of their minds; let them form classes for this purpose; let them have common reading-rooms and libraries; let them learn how to keep common accounts, the principles of book-keeping, and the dealings of trade. These are the first steps in learning, and which are most useful to themselves. When they have accomplished this, then let them extend their reading to other subjects, and never cease till they have dissipated those mists of ignorance in which they are at present enveloped.

16. Let them be assured, that knowledge is the only parent of plenty, and ignorance is the only parent of poverty. The rich have amassed their enormous capitals by superior knowledge alone—the poor have given this capital to the rich instead of saving it for themselves, from ignorance alone. Had all mankind remained ignorant, not one would ever have been rich. Had all the world been born full of knowledge, as they are born full of passions, none would ever have been poor. The world was first deluged with ignorance, in order to prove, to the end of time, that knowledge, and knowledge alone, is the true benevolent and omnipotent parent of virtue, religion, happiness, and plenty.

There are about one hundred and thirty Co-operative Societies now established.

Co-operative Manufactures may be now purchased at the Co-operative Bazaar, No. 19, Grenville Street, Hatton Garden.

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No. 21. JANUARY 1, 1830. 1d.

CO-OPERATION ADVANTAGEOUS TO GOVERNMENT.

1. The noblest spectacle upon earth, is a wise and good king, reigning over a great and happy people. A steady security for the rights of every man, and every body of men, is the great requisite of government; therefore, the power of affording this security, is the one great object of a wise and good king. The true interests of a king and his subjects are the same; for, each individual being anxious to carry his own importance to as high a pitch as possible, success in such a career, by continually increasing the importance and wealth of every individual, must in the same proportion increase that of the nation and its monarch. The monarch is the representative, and has the direction of the power, that is, of the wealth and intelligence of the nation; and a wise and good king is proud of that power, because it enables him to give security to his subjects, at home and abroad.

2. Power, greatness, and happiness, are in a manner, synonymous terms, as applied to nations. To use more homely language, they comprehend abundance of food, clothing, and houses; and the power of increasing that abundance to a considerable extent, when required for the emergencies of the state. They comprehend, therefore, a great mechanical and scientific power, equal to the production of food and clothing; capable also of expanding itself when called upon, sufficiently to meet the demands of the public. It is a peculiar property of scientific power, that it does not in ordinary times put forth all its energies—it has always a reserve in the back ground, ready to be brought into play when occasion requires. The ordinary demands of trade, produce ordinary exertions, and inventions (if we may so speak); but, when extraordinary hounties are given for new scientific powers, or for the exertion of old powers in new directions, the greatness of science is displayed by the readiness with which she answers these new calls upon her resources and energies.

3. National power, therefore, comprehends, production of all kinds, and the scientific power and machinery as the necessary means of this production. But scientific power comprehends essentially the power and intelligence of the mind, and cannot exist without it. It is the incessant activity of cultivated mind, the wonderful rapidity of thought—its unfettered range over the universe, material and spiritual—its freedom from the shackles of time and space—its power of comparing things the most unlike as well the most like, the most distant as well as the nearest—its divine flights “from earth to heaven, from heaven to earth,” which places it at the head of this our world, and in that image which was stamped upon it at its creation—goes on from febleness to strength, from simple to complicated, from the distaff to the power-loom, till its inventions appear to the untutored savage, and even to the ignorant idler of our own day, more like the miracles of nature than her ordinary operations, carried on in progressive steps, for the gradual amelioration and ultimate perfection of her children.

4. But this is not all. Great productive powers are essential; great mechanical and scientific powers are still more desirable; and a free and commanding intelligence—mind that can look around it, and survey the present, past and future, would be heaven's first

work, if there were not a still greater work in the beauty of moral perfection. It is indispensable, in order to make a nation great, that its character should be moral, under which term, we include religion. Intellect ought to spring out of a sublime and stern morality. The curiosity of man, to inquire into all the departments of nature, and all her wondrous secrets (every one of which is a mine of wealth for happy man), should be unbounded, as unbounded as nature herself, but it should also arise from some sort of moral instinct or persuasion, that there is a right and a wrong even in knowledge—that there is a duty bound up with the progressive improvement of the mind, independent of all relation to *filthy* lucre—and that no prosperity of mechanical power, science, or intelligence, can be permanent, except all are under the direction of an enlightened *conscience*.

5. These are the elements, therefore, of a great and happy people. They must be wealthy in all kinds of production: they must have brought arts and sciences to considerable perfection, in order to insure a continued and increasing supply: they must possess great intelligence and cultivated powers of mind, that they may be respected by friends and feared by enemies: and above all, they should be imbued with a high tone of morality in all their transactions and habits, carrying their moral and religious feelings to the same pitch of perfection that they do their intellectual powers: and then will they truly become a happy as well as a great nation, since the feeling of happiness is evidently of a moral kind.

6. It remains now to be shewn that Co-operation is favorable to all these particulars. FIRST—it is favorable to *production*: for what does it propose to do, but to better the condition of the working classes, and even of the very lowest of the community? And how is this to be done, but by a new and increased production of all kinds of wealth, of food, clothing, manufactures and houses? Nothing will be taken away from the wealth already in existence. No demands will be made upon the property of present capitalists, but a new capital will be saved and produced, and accumulated, upon which, future workmen will be able to better their condition permanently, by working for themselves on their own capital, without hanging as a perpetual dead weight upon present capitalists, in the shape of charity and poor rates.

7. Present capitalists will of course continue to require and to encourage the same production as at present. As their capital will not diminish, so the manufactures required by them will not diminish. If then, by means of Co-operation, machines and labour, which are now standing idle, can be brought into action; if new machinery also can be produced to assist this labour in its new direction, the wealth of a kingdom will be a gainer, just in proportion to the spread of Co-operation. The market is now over-stocked with labour. A vast number of labourers consume food and clothing, who produce nothing in return. A vast number of intelligent men are employed in managing unemployed workmen, in charitable institutions, work-houses, legal and other situations. How many barristers are employed, merely in determining whether a family shall consume food in one parish or another? All which is merely talking to the winds. If all these people, from the barrister to the parish beadle, were employed in directing labour to useful production, seeing that they would consume no more than they do at present, it is mere absurdity and contradiction to say that more wealth would not be produced, and that the nation would not be richer, greater and more powerful; to say nothing of the different degrees of happiness attached to the employment of useful production, or to that of acrimonious bickerings and formal wranglings.

8. It is said by some whose views of Co-operation are imperfect, that the desires of men in such a state would soon be satisfied, and then all progress would be at an end, and a retrograde movement would take place, and men would relapse into barbarism. This is one of the happiest objections possible for the friends of Co-operation, for it at once acknowledges it to be a cure for the discontent,

idleness, profligacy, pauperism, and over-population of the working classes. "Place them in Co-operation, all their desire and passions will be suddenly extinguished, and their numbers easily limited to the gauge of the economist." We say on the contrary—"their desires and passions will be refined and stimulated like those of other capitalists: like them, they must use fresh exertions in order to gratify them; and these exertions cannot be made without benefitting the nation as a body, in the same proportion in which they benefit themselves." We do not want human desires, and with them production, to cease; we want both to go on increasing indefinitely, and this we are confident will follow the spread of Co-operation.

9. **SECONDLY:** an important ingredient in national greatness, is *intelligence*. "Strong minds will always govern weak ones." Superior talents and acquirements, will always bear away the prize. Well-disciplined armies, commanded by skilful officers, will always conquer superior numbers of a contrary description. Nations which are merely rich in food, must yield to those which are richer in intellect. It is upon this principle, that the conquerors of the earth have fearlessly attacked mighty empires with small numerical means. The higher and midling classes of England have reached a high pitch of cultivation, compared with other ages and nations. It is this that has given and must continue to give them, while it lasts, a decided superiority. If the same intelligence could be extended to every man in the country—if those which are now the lowest and most ignorant, could be placed, in point of understanding, where the midling ranks now are—while these were elevated in the same proportion—England might then boast, that she did not possess a son who was not fit to exercise, when called upon, all the offices of peace or war.

10. Co-operation cannot proceed without intelligence. The moment men, even workmen, assemble, to consider how their affairs can be best managed, as a matter of business, their minds receive a new impulse, new ideas, new motives, new objects. They are obliged to exercise their judgment, to weigh and balance probabilities—to count the profit and loss—and to acquire a knowledge of human character. These are the same qualities which are called into exercise in the highest situations in society. They may differ in degree, but do not differ in kind. While a person merely works for wages, he has only to obey orders and put forth his physical strength—or to understand and direct a machine: but whoever undertakes to manage any business, however small, must call into use, all the powers of his mind—must begin to use judgment, discretion, and invention—and must, accordingly, cultivate these qualities in exact proportion to the extent of his concerns.

11. If the mind continues to be occupied in this manner, for a series of years, it will receive a practical education much more improving than the dry lessons of schools, which exercise the memory by rote without opening and strengthening the understanding. All co-operators will become, to a certain extent, men of business. But they cannot become men of business without becoming men of knowledge. This knowledge will be of the best kind, because it will be practical. Nor will it be trifling in itself—as it will extend over every article in which they are concerned, the market from which it is supplied, its variations in price, and the cause of those variations. Thus they will be led, easily, to the natural history of all that they consume and deal in. When they get far enough to manufacture for themselves, they must be introduced to new knowledge, of a higher kind. When they begin to invest capital in machinery, a still higher knowledge will be forced upon them: nor is it easy to assign a limit to their progress.

12. Habits of business will thus, necessarily, force practical knowledge upon the working classes. Nor will this be all the knowledge they will acquire. The flood-gates of knowledge once opened, can never be shut. Workmen are now acquiring knowledge: they have been doing so for many years. Rival societies are formed, which vie and compete with each other in supplying it cheapest and

best. Schools which teach for a penny a-week, are turning out better scholars, better writers, better draughtsmen, better elementary geometers, than those which teach for shillings, or than many which teach for pounds: the reason is, they practice better methods. Many circumstances combine to prove that the children of workmen are capable of acquiring considerable knowledge, and what is better, a taste and relish for more, before the time when they generally leave school.

13. One of the first convictions upon the mind of a Co-operator, is the necessity of knowledge and intelligence. Those who are of a suitable age, immediately begin to read and to learn—sometimes alone, sometimes together, as circumstances point out. This goes hand in hand with attention to their own affairs; and those who are most assiduous in the one, are also most so in the other. Co-operation, therefore, will increase the intelligence of the lowest classes of society. Workmen, by mixing together, must instruct each other. If the mass improve, the few who are more stupid or degraded, must be polished and civilized by this improvement of their companions, and those who do not co-operate, must necessarily be influenced and elevated by those that do.

14. **THIRDLY:** the greatest and most beneficial efforts of Co-operation will be, upon the moral character; and here those effects will be mighty. Practical Co-operation, (as distinguished from that absurd theoretic Co-operation which has been talked of so long and to so little purpose) goes directly to improve the moral and religious character of men. This is the final end and consummation of the cause. Were there nothing else to recommend it, and were the chances of such an effect ever so trifling, the experiment would deserve encouragement in the present forlorn and hopeless state of society. A nation, which is poor and barbarous, might be happy, if it were possible for it to be, at the same time, virtuous and religious: but all the wealth of "Indus and of Orme" would only fill up a cup of bitterness, in the absence of those qualities. The history of every nation is a comment upon this truth.

15. Co-operation requires mutual confidence among the members. One bad character may ruin a society, if not detected. Each member must have the eyes of all the other members upon him. The whole society is guarantee for the character of each. A bad man placed in such a society, must either reform or quit it. If he quits it, his character is known—and the members will have the same interest as the public at large, in preventing him from becoming a public nuisance. The members being obliged, frequently, to meet together, the same habits of civility spring up as in other classes. Mutual respect and forbearance, distinguish their meetings and the absence of all harsh or injurious expressions. This friendly intercourse attaches the members to each other, and is a new addition to their happiness. These effects have already taken place, even in the present infant state of such societies.

16. If then, Co-operation tends to increase the wealth and resources of a nation—the intelligence of all her inhabitants, even to the very lowest—and to prove a powerful aid to those institutions which already exist, for the especial purpose of refining and elevating the moral and religious character of men—surely it must be advantageous to government; surely it must be consonant to the wishes of a wise and good king! Happy will that country be, at home and abroad, whose working population shall be intelligent enough to be the first to enter upon this new system! Happy will that land be, which shall thus draw down the divine blessing upon its hills and vallies, its mountains and rivers! And still happier, Oh! my country! if that land be England.

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SICKELMORE, BRIGHTON.

THE CO-OPERATOR.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNION ARE POWER :
POWER, DIRECTED BY KNOWLEDGE, IS HAPPINESS :
HAPPINESS IS THE END OF CREATION.

No. 22. FEBRUARY 1, 1830. 1d.

Few things have given us greater satisfaction, since the commencement of our labours, than the following letter. It is written by a gentleman of great attainments, and holding a high and important office in the state. It is a pleasing proof that the upper classes are beginning to understand and appreciate the principles of PURE practical Co-operation. The pure co-operation of the upper and working classes in the great cause of the moral and religious improvement of man, will be a glorious day for the world!

To the Editor of the Brighton Co-operator.

SIR,—Having been induced to peruse attentively your monthly lucubrations, (partly by the manner in which you rival or surpass Dr. Franklin, in simplicity and force—but much more by the general importance of your attempt to improve the condition of the industrious classes of civilized society) I requested a friend, resident near Brighton, to procure for me, the *printed rules* by which I supposed the Co-operative Societies in that place to be governed, under your presumed recommendation and influence,—you will allow me to confess a feeling of disappointment at receiving (instead of what I desired) my friend's answer—"that no general rules seemed hitherto to have been settled and promulgated." Hence, I was led to consider in my mind, the probable cause of what appeared to be a palpable deficiency; and I concluded, (after reading some of your monthly publications a second time) that the largeness of your views had precluded you from settling a foundation on which the future superstructure was to be built.

2. But let me submit to your consideration, that a foundation may be traced, though not fixed, without injury to matured after-thoughts; and if you admit the assistance of a fellow-labourer of Co-operation, I will hazard a sketch which may be criticised, altered, and amended at your pleasure.

3. Generally speaking, the grand aim of your plan seems to be an increased respectability of the industrious class of mankind in knowledge—and therefore, in justice and morality; since those who seek to participate in the expected benefit, thereby virtually avow and proclaim their implicit approbation and adoption of fair dealing—of persevering in their resolution to buy—and afterwards, to sell among themselves, for ready money, all the necessaries of life.

4. Whether they shall sell to others, or how far they shall venture to deal in other commodities beyond the absolute necessaries of life, is a further question: at present, I will consider the effect of co-operation in its simplest form; in which, indeed, it may seem to assume that title prematurely—unless, perhaps, as an avowal of further intentions when dictated by experience and increased resources.

5. In my solitary calculations, I was assuming that one-fourth part—threepence in every shilling, paid by the labouring classes, was the average surcharge of the shop-keeper from whom they purchase in the usual manner: but I was corrected by a friend of more practical knowledge, who convinced me that one-third—four pence in the shilling, was the customary profit of village shop-keepers; the labour of numerous small accounts—of watching the movements of their customers (especially when they are paid by their employers)—and of receiving debts in part and at irregular intervals, added to the final losses which must be risked and often sustained by such shop-keepers, actually compelling them to add this seemingly enormous profit to the prime cost of all commodities.

6. Nor is this incredible when it is recollected that reluctant evidence is extant (given by London tradesmen, before a select committee of the House of Commons), that fourteen or fifteen per cent.—nearly twopence in the shilling, is of necessity charged by them, against all customers, to indemnify themselves from the effect of bad debts: in some trades, such as fashionable tailors and coach makers, it is no secret to the most cursory enquirer, that this is not thought enough. The ready-money shops in London and elsewhere, were founded on such considerations—and have been highly useful in rescuing the honest man from a heavy tax, which was really, though not directly, paid over for the maintenance of those who contract debts without intention of payment.

7. The same sort of benefit and in a greater degree, is obviously attainable by the labouring classes—and, I hope, without much prejudice to the industrious shop-keeper; certainly with advantage to an essential part of him—*his conscience*; which, in the present state of things, remains in a dissatisfied state, from the necessity of his doing like others—of using deficient weights and measures, for the concealment of what might otherwise appear an exorbitant profit.

8. Nor is the shopkeeper deeply reprehensible for this unfair practice, because it results inevitably from a defect in the execution of the *law* against false weights and measures. This law, without being considered as an important part of the police of a civilized nation, is left to be enforced or not, at the discretion of a petty constable, who is not high enough in station to despise the ill-will always incurred by uncalled for activity in office: and it is remarkable, that the common law of the land, enforced by a statute as old (I believe) as the reign of Edward III. requiring High Constables and Petty Constables to make presentments of various offences, among which were enumerated “false weights and measures,” was repealed in the year 1827, as having become useless and improper—but without substituting any practical remedy in place of the abolished law of presentment. Such defect in the new act is not likely to escape the vigilance of the present Secretary of State for the Home Department, especially as its preamble and enactments are at variance. Thus, because presentments by *Petty Constables* are become “useless,” presentments by *High Constables*, which have often been useful and important, are also abolished: because presentments at “Petty Sessions” are said to be expensive and troublesome, presentments at Petty Sessions and “elsewhere,” that is, at *Quarter Sessions* by *High Constables*, are also abolished. Perhaps the Member who introduced the act of 1827, accidentally omitted to substitute in place of Constables’ presentments, a power to Magistrates (if they have it not already) to direct proper persons to visit shops unexpectedly, and to report the result at the next Petty Sessions.

9. Let me now imagine the inhabitants of a country village, or the workmen in a factory, or at some trade in a town—in short, any connection of a hundred families, among whom shall be forty who punctually pay the shopkeeper, thus enabling him to supply the other sixty families at long credit, and sometimes final loss to himself. Suppose a few heads of families to read this letter in your Co-operator, and thereupon to combine together to raise their own wages three pence or four pence in the shilling—or, what is the same thing, to purchase wholesale all commodities at prime cost, and to retail them among themselves at nearly the same rate.

10. These persons would forthwith speak to others, who as well as themselves probably have a little money in some Savings’ Bank, or can borrow enough from their employers for a month’s consumption—(much less, when the co-operative society became numerous, would suffice). They would next bethink themselves of bespeaking the goodwill and countenance of some *Patron* in the infancy of their co-operation; and would seldom fail to find one in the clergyman of the parish, or some other respectable and intelligent individual (they might even address themselves to a resident Magistrate) in whom all reposed confidence, and who might perhaps give them

weights and scales, and a few shelves for their new store-shop. Such persons (happily for us) are not rare in the civilised state of morality at which we are arrived. I may even say, that those are not rare who would smooth the progress of their humble neighbours towards more comfort than before has fallen to their lot in life, by a moderate sacrifice of money in advance, as well as of time abstracted from their leisure hours, or even from their own pursuits. Before the Patron then, I shall suppose the intentions and wishes of the expectant co-operators to have been confidently and successfully displayed.

11. The place, and manner of dispensing commodities in retail, is first to be considered: because that may influence other preliminary arrangements. If the society shall not at first exceed ten families, the member who resides in the largest cottage, and has a trust-worthy active helpmate (who can read and write), would first undertake the trouble at such rate of remuneration as might be agreed upon. Ten families would probably expend five pounds per week in bread, potatoes and half a dozen specified articles of grocery, or other necessaries. The active female who undertakes, as treasurer, to purchase those things in quantity at the lowest ready money price; and, as retailer, to dispense them at stated hours, would be sufficiently rewarded with one penny in the shilling, or, on larger sales, with one shilling in the pound, according to a scale agreed upon by the parties and ratified by the Patron of the society. Thus the woman would receive about one shilling a day for her labour and attention, without being too much drawn away from her domestic cares; and at the same time be fortified in good conduct, by the expectations of profiting more largely, in proportion as the society should spread its reputation and increase in number of members under her thrifty management.

12. Indeed, I think that a very moderate addition of members would justify our supposed society in extending their views to increased benefit, by permitting persons not of their society to purchase at their shop or store—introductory to which an arrangement must be made, in other respects desirable, especially in abolishing the troublesome use of the above mentioned scale. I mean, that the members (in common with other persons) shall purchase at a reasonable advance of price upon the prime cost, with this result, that some of the members at a weekly meeting shall habitually examine the remaining stock in hand, and appropriate the accruing profit of the week, either individually, or for the common benefit of the society; and at the same time they could not fail thereby to ascertain the sum fairly payable by a new member on admission, as regulated by the prime cost value of the stock in hand. By sharing the profits weekly, rather than always purchasing at prime cost, habitual accumulation would be facilitated. By renting a large room (perhaps with a fire place and oven attached) for a children's school in the day time, and for evening meetings on the affairs of the society, or for the improving intercourse of conversation (in which the wiser heads of the society would inevitably become the advisers and instructors of the less enlightened), the social comforts and advantages of the more opulent classes would be attained at small expense.

13. And herein, to which I confess I attach no small importance, the desolate state of the unmarried agricultural labourer, driven from the farm-house fireside of our forefathers by the poor laws, (which permit not a house servant without fixing a parishioner) might find remedy without his having recourse to premature marriage, much to his own detriment and that of the nation, through whose well intended, but injurious legislation, he is made a solitary lodger in some comfortless cottage room, unless he can afford to spend his vacant hours at the village a'chouse, where he too often learns to become a poacher or a smuggler, and in the usual course of events is finally misled to violate the laws of moral obligation.

14. I have not yet sufficiently explained why I introduce a Patron in the structure of every co-operative society. My chief reason is,

for precluding ruinous litigation, which would too often occur on the death or expulsion of a member, unless every one shall have signed an *arbitration bond*, under which all questions relative to his property in the society shall be finally decided by the Patron. Not that I undervalue the prevention of useless and dangerous disputes at the regular meeting of those whose equality of station might leave room for undue obstinacy, unless moderated by the benevolent influence of a peace-making individual, interested solely by his regard to the general welfare of the society under his Patronage.

15. Your own ulterior views, Mr. Editor, could not proceed far without some such arbitrator, nor should I rely on the permanence of any society, whose fundamental laws, such as *that of dealing for ready money only*, were not enforced by a power greater than their own mutual authority and exercised without respect of persons. An individual member of the society might indeed withdraw himself, or misbehave so as to be expelled; and a major part of the members might vote the dissolution of the society; but the Patron must not be removeable otherwise than by his own consent to surrender his office to a successor.

16. What is the incentive, it will be asked—what the motives, for undertaking such an office? I answer, the obvious good of the members of the society in particular; and remotely, the good of the public, by fostering the best seeds of morality. Many faults have already been avoided by him who prefers prompt payment to obtaining long credit, and as the mutual interest of all the members of co-operative societies would induce them, in the aggregate, to enforce respectable conduct on each other, such societies in their possible extension could not but operate as a standing premium on good behaviour; and if a large majority were once enlisted in such societies, the minority of mankind must of necessity qualify themselves to do so likewise, because no shopkeeper could afford to furnish goods exclusively to such customers as never offer ready money payment.

17. Every Co-operative Society would, in fact, be a pledge for the good conduct of its members; because, expulsion of the unworthy would not fail to purify it occasionally. Thus, every member would, tacitly, possess a letter of recommendation to trust-worthy—that is, to the best employments; and every man not an accredited member, would have to struggle through life, at vast disadvantage, supported only by his own personal merit: so that we might rationally expect to arrive, spontaneously, at that state of mutual suretyship which is supposed to have been enforced (certainly was aimed at) by the severe institutions of our Saxon ancestors.

18. But I feel I am exceeding the due bounds of a tolerated correspondent; and I shall only add, that the situation of the village shopkeeper, if he become treasurer and retailer to a flourishing society of co-operators, would not be altered for the worse, in thus replacing, by a certain income, the irksome turmoil of dunning paupers for payment—and the not unfrequent failure of his own affairs: nor do I despair of Patrons being found, who will obviate this and other minor objections, by their beneficial influence. May I not even venture to hope that voluntary Patrons will recommend and thereby create co-operative societies—instead of *waiting* until the slow progress of information and argument, shall have reached and persuaded their neighbours and workmen, to lay the foundation of a co-operative society *before* applying for patronage?

19. I shall be well satisfied, for my own part, if every one who happens to read this letter, forthwith considers whether or not, in his own particular circle, a Co-operative Society, to the extent I have described, would not be a promising experiment; one which if it answer in any degree my expectations, will highly benefit the industrious classes—and, through their Patrons, knit together all classes in a common effort for the comfort and moral improvement of mankind.

January, 1830.

R.

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THE CO-OPERATOR.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNION ARE POWER :
POWER, DIRECTED BY KNOWLEDGE, IS HAPPINESS :
HAPPINESS IS THE END OF CREATION.

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CO-OPERATION ADVANTAGEOUS TO THE UPPER CLASSES.

1. The letter with which we were favored in our last number, is a proof that we are not singular in expecting beneficial consequences to flow from the spread of Co-operative principles among the working classes. To the working classes themselves, we recommend the attentive perusal of the fifth and ninth paragraphs of the *letter*, as proving the immediate and immense advantages which they will derive from being their own shopkeepers. When they deal at common shops, they necessarily pay for all the bad debts contracted by all the bad customers: but by having a shop of their own, where no credit is given or taken, all this money, from ten to twenty per cent., goes into their own treasury; and this alone, would, in the course of time, accumulate into a capital sufficient, upon Co-operative principles, to secure independence. We hope, at the same time, they will learn to pity the situation of the little shopkeeper; who, while he unwillingly taxes them for the payment of bad debts, is too often doomed to close a career of frugality and anxiety by ruin and bankruptcy.

2. To those above the working classes, who may condescend to peruse these pages, we recommend the consideration of the sixteenth and seventeenth paragraphs; in which the effects are described, which these societies are likely to have upon the characters of the members, and upon the mutual guarantee they will establish among a number of individuals for the good conduct of each other. This guarantee we have already insisted upon, and it is a peculiar feature in Co-operation. The present state of society affords nothing like it, and never can. There are many tests of character among the upper classes, but none among the lower. When a man has performed his day's work, all controul of the master ceases. It is not possible to follow the labourer into his private occupations. The contract ends with the labour and the wages. But in Co-operation, a new and different contract is entered into. It is, essentially, one of character. The prosperity of the Society depends upon it. It becomes the right and the duty of every member, to ascertain the private character of those on whom his property and future happiness, and that of his children, may depend.

3. We cannot help observing that our correspondent has judiciously, and we may add profoundly, alluded to the wisdom of our Saxon ancestors, in endeavouring to establish such mutual guarantee of character universally through the body politic. This is that "wisdom of ancestors" from which modern wisdom has widely departed; or rather, which having been departed from,

modern wisdom has never even attempted to regain.—The classification and enrolment of the whole population, if entered upon with judgment and moderation, and through the instrumentality of the people themselves, would establish an intimate knowledge of the state, character, and wants of every class (even of the lowest); and would lead inevitably to farther practical arrangements for their comfort and improvement, as the changes in arts, sciences, knowledge, and other circumstances, might render advisable and imperative.

4. We have then a powerful advocate, just at the moment when wanted;—one from the upper classes themselves, to confirm and elucidate our views upon this most interesting subject;—to shew that some new experiment is wanted, in the present state of society;—some new resources called for, in favour of that large class of our fellow creatures, who, while they produce all our food, clothing, and habitations, are themselves bordering on starvation.

5. We propose to shew more particularly than we have done, that Co-operation would be advantageous to the upper classes: that it is not contrived in a spirit of hostility and spoliation: that it is not the offspring of fanaticism, or anarchy: that it is not a deep-laid scheme for invading the property of the upper classes; but a system, which, while it will secure the independence of those who adopt it, will give security to the prosperity of others, and remove those evils which are now most loudly complained of by the upper classes.

6. These evils are pauperism and crime. The upper classes have no sooner received their rents, mortgages, and dividends, than they are assailed by a host of locusts, in the shape of taxes, poor rates, and charitable subscriptions and donations. When men come into the world, they must live. Those who cannot live honestly, will live by crime. Those who cannot live by labour, must live by legal and private charity. The old, the sick, and the young, all press upon the upper classes for support; and the punishment of crime when committed, is carried on at their expense. Jails, work-houses, and hospitals, are built at an enormous expense; and their necessary establishments are supported at a certain annual amount, which must be regularly and punctually discharged, or the fearful evils of crime, starvation, and disease, would inundate the land.

7. These establishments are maintained by the rich, from urgent necessity, and a deep and palpable conviction that all property would otherwise be at the mercy of the ruffians of the world—and that life itself, would not be safe from their ruthless hands. Such, in fact, was the case in more barbarous times; when protection could not be obtained from law, but depended upon personal strength and bravery. As the public arm was lengthened, that of private people was shortened; and the study of personal protection gave way to that of the arts and literature, and the elegancies of life. But should these establishments at all relax in their activity,—should their operations be curtailed upon the plea of sparing the pockets of the taxed, and principally of the rich,—taxes of tenfold weight will be instantly levied upon them by a different band of officers, whose appetite will not be satisfied without the payment of the last farthing.

8. Thus the rich, or upper classes, are now placed, by irresistible laws, in a situation of peril. Crime and pauperism are making upon them on every side. New demands are made upon their purses and their time; while these demands are urged in such a way, as to make a large class of their fellow creatures appear their natural enemies. These enemies must be fed, clothed, and lodged, at the expense of the rich, who derive from them no return. As enemies, they must be feared and hated; yet they exist in the very bosom of society, ready to take advantage of any opportunity which a relaxation of vigilance may afford, to sacrifice their victims.

9. Crime on one side and the diminution of profit on the other, the latter necessarily following the increasing power of machinery,

must gradually pare down the income of the rich. Those capitalists who consume without producing, will feel their means of consumption lessen. This they already declare to the public, and take care to do it in a public manner. Whether this is wise, is another question: that it speaks a momentous fact cannot be disputed: and it is upon such facts that we wish to argue. They proclaim, with a voice not to be mistaken, that the situation of the upper classes is one of jeopardy.

10. But crime and pauperism do not affect the happiness of the upper classes alone: they do not constitute a question merely between the upper classes and criminals and paupers: they draw into the question, the happiness and comforts of the middle classes as well. The enormous taxes which are levied, fall upon all classes as well as the upper. Every industrious, hard-working, and hard-thinking man, is curtailed in his comforts and enjoyments. Having no servants or supernumeraries to turn off, he is obliged to turn off his own desires and wants as they arise, and to banish from himself a part of his very nature. Every effort of this kind is disagreeable. The repetition of them irritates and sours the temper, which gradually settles down into habitual discontent. Discontent naturally looks upwards to those who have the comforts and enjoyments we ourselves want. Envy and jealousy are the natural offspring of such a state of mind, and their companion hatred is never far behind them. But the middle classes are the hands of the upper classes, as the working classes are their feet. The middle classes think and plan and execute for the upper classes: they direct the labour, the machinery, and the commerce, by which the riches of every climate are assembled in the saloons of the rich: they build these very saloons for the rich to repose in.

11. If then the upper classes are loaded with taxes, for the support and custody of criminals—if they live in a state of perpetual warfare with them: if the same taxes press heavily upon the middle classes, and drive them into discontent and hatred: can the situation of the upper classes be one of peace and tranquility? Is it desirable? Is it safe? It is in vain for them to imagine that they stand alone. In such a solitude, they have neither hands nor feet: they have no power, alone, to direct or to execute; for the middle classes do the one, and the working classes the other. Do they wish this state of taxation, crime, enmity, and discontent to continue? Do they wish it to increase? Do they wish it to run on to its natural termination of anarchy and ruin? If not, let them encourage Co-operation.

12. Co-operation aims at giving property and character to the working classes: it aims at transforming them from paupers into self-supporting industrious men—from criminals into men of honesty and integrity. It aims at giving them property, the work of their own hands, and the saving of their own frugality. We conceive that the possession of property is the basis upon which is built, not only the comfort of the possessor, but the improvement of his moral and intellectual character. To save, to increase, and to employ capital advantageously, require the exercise of the best qualities of the mind and heart. They render the cultivation of the mind desirable, and an improved education necessary. A man who has an independent income may choose whether he will think or not; but a man whose property depends upon thought, must choose between thought and ruin.

13. The possession of property tends, more than any cause, to produce respect for the property of others. The man who possesses nothing, can lose nothing by misconduct. He is a tool, ready for the use of any adventurer, or party, which wants his physical force. Subsistence for the day, and the gratification of his appetites, are the only motives which influence him. There is no saying how low such an unhappy being may sink in the scale of humanity; for we have seen instances, in our day, in which the death of the scaffold seemed to one individual as honorable, as that of the bayonet to

another. Yet some there are, who would seem to prefer such a race of British workmen to a race of Co-operators—who propose to place themselves beyond the possibility of pauperism and crime, and within the pale of property, character, and knowledge.

14. But Co-operation, if practicable at all, cannot be limited to the working classes. At present indeed they are struggling alone, against all the difficulties which inexperience, ignorance, and the want of honesty and character in their agents, subject them to. Should they surmount these impediments, as they undoubtedly will, they will then be joined gradually by the classes above them; and the superior character, education, and skill of these, will be enlisted into the service, which will thus move with an accelerated velocity, and march in peaceful but glorious triumph through the world. Thus, as Co-operation spreads, the pauperism and crime of the working classes will diminish. The two events will act as cause and effect, and the effect will be proportionate to the cause. The universal prevalence of Co-operation among the working and middle classes must be accompanied by the total cessation of crime, and the annihilation of pauperism.

15. In pleading the cause of Co-operation, we hardly know whether we are advocating most the interests of the upper or the working classes. On the other hand, we are struck with pity to see the incessant and laborious exertions of the working classes, rewarded with vice, pauperism and crime—to see noble natures and divine faculties ruined by untoward circumstances and Hottentot ignorance: on the other hand, in these eventful times we cannot view without apprehension, indications of approaching storms, which seem to flit along the horizon of society; while a universal opinion seems to have seized the minds of the upper classes themselves, that no plausible remedy for crime, pauperism and general discontent, has yet been proposed.

16. The remedy seems to us to be, to transfer unproductive consumers into the class of producers, by placing them on land on their own account; to invest the annual surplus of their produce in machinery of their own, or otherwise, as may be thought expedient; to turn the labor or talents of every individual to useful account, and thus to diminish that large class of idlers of all ranks, whose vicious and corrupting influence spreads its poisonous venom wherever they go. Whether this be done by voluntary Co-operation, or by a system of common labor under the direction of enlightened and benevolent men of practical knowledge, similar to the Dutch Colonies, we are convinced the result would prove beneficial to the parties concerned and to the public at large; and that it would go farther than any other remedy yet proposed to diminish those difficulties and avert those calamities, which, however incredible before they happen, frequently have happened in the history of the world, and seem to some minds to be now impending over the upper classes.

NOTICE.—We are obliged to S. for his remarks—our motto has been the subject of much discussion. It is our own rule in interpreting others, to put upon an expression the most liberal interpretation it will bear. The word, KNOWLEDGE, must be taken in its most comprehensive sense. A man knows nothing who does not know that virtue is essential to happiness, and to the happy direction of power: and the man knows little who does not know that virtue, though it be not religion, has little foundation to stand upon without it. We refer S., on this subject, to "A Letter to the Rev. W. L. Pope, Tunbridge Wells, in reply to Two Sermons preached by him on the subject of Co-operation."

Sickelmore, Printers, Brighton.

THE CO-OPERATOR.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNION ARE POWER :
POWER, DIRECTED BY KNOWLEDGE, IS HAPPINESS :
HAPPINESS IS THE END OF CREATION.

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OBJECTIONS ANSWERED.

1. We have endeavoured in these pages to develop and illustrate an impression which our own minds have received—that Co-operation, if reduced to practice, would be advantageous to all classes of the community, to the upper classes, the working classes, the rich, and the poor: it would strengthen the hands of government—it would put an end to pauperism and crime: it would draw down science to the daily walks of life, and raise the ignorant boor to the rank of rational beings. If we have succeeded in our attempt, it is unnecessary to answer specific objections—they fall to the ground of themselves: if we have not succeeded, we must, necessarily, fail in answering objections. If a direct view of the subject is not satisfactory, an indirect one will never be so.

2. Still, however, objections are made. Some minds seem to be unable to perceive any subject but in its objections. This is very much the character of the age in which we live. All people seem dissatisfied with all things; not only in politics and religion, but in matters one would think of plainer import;—dissatisfied with crime, and remedies proposed for it; with pauperism, and with independent workmen; with ignorance, and with its antidote, knowledge:—perhaps, even a millennium would disappoint some people if it did not come in the way in which they expect it.

3. It is objected by some, that Co-operation has a REVOLUTIONARY tendency: that it teaches the poor to combine against the rich: that it breeds discontent with their present lot: that it represents the possession of individual property as an act of injustice, and holds up the property of the upper classes as a fair object of plunder to the working classes: that it attributes all the sufferings of the working classes to the tyranny of the rich.

4. If it be meant by such charges, that there are persons among Co-operators who hold these sentiments, the charges may be true, and yet perfectly frivolous: for there is no party or sect under the sun, among whom individuals may not be found holding the most absurd and dangerous opinions. We fear there are too many Neros, in all classes, who would be glad if mankind had but one neck, which they might strike off at a blow. But if the charge be brought against the plain principles of Co-operation, they are a mere misrepresentation, and can only proceed from a superlative ignorance of the subject. Though Co-operation is only another expression for “brotherly love,” yet we do not at all expect to shield ourselves under such an explanation. We have reason to conclude, that the principle of “brotherly love” is far from being viewed as a desirable one in practice, by many whose lips are accustomed to it in theory.

5. It is not a little singular, that while some object to Co-operation because they think it will produce a revolution, others object to it

because they think it will prevent one. "If," say they, "the poor co-operate, they will acquire property and information; they will then be above want and discontent; and their minds will be too much occupied in their own affairs, and too well satisfied with them, to think of risking any thing by a national commotion." Thus, the reasoning of the radical is truly orthodox, though his wishes are the other way: while the honest objector is actuated by proper feelings, though they are not seconded by legitimate argument.

6. The combination which Co-operation inculcates, is not one of the poor against the rich, nor of workmen against masters; but a rational application of the principle upon which every man acts, and is directed to act,—that of bettering his condition. It is this principle which has raised mankind from barbarism to civilization: and which will, one day, we trust, raise them from pauperism to Co-operative independence. We know not how far this principle is destined to be carried by Providence,—but, probably, far beyond our present conceptions: for, unless the progress of man were meant to be indefinite, there seems no reason for ever raising him above the rank of a savage;—for ever giving him intellectual cultivation, and a knowledge of the arts and sciences; or, above all, for making him acquainted with the high and sublime fate that awaits him beyond the tomb.

7. The combination of Co-operation is not directed against the property of others: first, because their own property would be liable to similar depredations; and secondly, because they have no occasion for it. Co-operative Societies have already proved, that property increases faster than the ability of managing it, whenever a certain fund is set apart to accumulate, without being used for current expenses. Co-operators know, that such funds judiciously applied, with all the assistance derived from modern machinery, would produce the necessaries of life in greater abundance than they could be used. The evil of the present day is not that workmen cannot produce their own support, but that too large a proportion of mouths are unproductive, and do nothing but consume.

8. Co-operation is a combination against idleness, against pauperism and crime (as we have so often reiterated), against vice and misery. A certain number of the working classes are treading in the steps of those of the upper classes, who have long entered upon this holy war. Surely such allies must be desirable: they are enemies turned friends. These enemies are no longer to be fought, to be converted, to be dreaded. So far the work of the friends of humanity is done. Where is the objection to fighting side by side? Those who objected to them as enemies, will surely not object to them as friends,—unless habit should so far prevail over reason, as to render the use of offensive weapons a second nature.

9. Should Co-operation succeed, Co-operators will be raised from the class of workmen into that of men of property. As men of property, they will belong to the class which is now indeed above them, but which will then be only on a level with them. Men of property cannot be objected to by men of property as such. Why, then, should the honest acquisition of property be considered an evil, a crime, when the possession of it is the seat of honor? On the contrary, if Co-operation is really practicable, its success will be hailed as a blessing by all classes.

10. We must again repeat, that the desire of property to be fairly acquired, is the most anti-revolutionary of all principles. The revolutionary principle is one of destruction: the Co-operative principle is one of accumulation:—the former pulls down: the latter builds up:—the former scatters: the latter gathers:—the former reaps without sowing: the latter sows to reap.

11. There are two words (we might almost call them "cant terms") which are flung about, in the present day, at every body's head who happens to think or to act in a manner different from ourselves, particularly, on any subject which concerns the well-being of the LOWER ORDERS, as they are called: the one is REVOLUTION, the other INFIDELITY. Co-operation was scarcely born before it had to bear the burthen of both these epithets. First derided, then abused,

it is to be hoped that it will outlive both these accusations, as HERESY of old outlived fire and faggot, and became ESTABLISHED ORTHODOXY. When men accuse each other of revolutionary principles, we may smile at it as a mere party watch word. When serious men are too familiar with the term INFIDELITY, we may well express surprise, that persons professing to believe that they shall have to give account of every idle word, should undertake to determine the state of another man's heart.

12. Yet so it is. And when a set of men have united themselves together for the purpose of interchanging the charities of life, upon a principle of "having all things in common," they are accused of wishing to subvert the plain practical precepts of the gospel!—It has been observed, by a celebrated writer, that we should never be surprised at observing contradictions in the human mind. Those who have seen most of the world, will be most ready to assent to this proposition: and it may be observed, in passing, that it is fortunate for man, that, in the limited state of his knowledge and faculties, he can entertain contradictory notions without discomfort. But still it is the object of a rational being to pare these away, one by one; and so to build up a faultless state of mind for future generations, which may give birth to a more faultless state of practice.

13. The word infidelity has been applied to Co-operation, partly in the spirit of abuse, partly from the circumstance of some of the advocates of the cause having professed themselves sceptical on the subject of revolution. This we are free to confess. Some men may make much of such confession. We do not perceive that it has any thing to do with the good or evil of the cause itself. If every cause were to fall which numbers sceptics among its disciples, we know not what is to stand. On this subject "we might a tale unfold, would harrow up the soul." The voice of history, and of the bible, speaks emphatically of the hypocrisy of man. The man who most strongly believes the divinity of the bible, must most strongly doubt the belief of the fire-and-faggot-men, either of ancient or modern times.

14. When a man invents a useful machine, or constructs a beautiful building, or makes wide researches into the truths of NATURAL HISTORY, we never refuse to admire or to use the produce of his labour and ingenuity, till we have enquired into his religious creed. Providence has, no doubt, endowed man with a strong religious faculty or feeling; but he has endowed him with many others besides, all essential to his happiness and perfection, though not all, perhaps, equally important,—and yet, all must be important which comes from such a hand, and goes to make up the noblest of his creatures.

15. Therefore, when a useful practical principle has been struck out by a person whose other opinions we may disapprove of; if that practical principle can be separated from his other opinions, and has no necessary connexion with them; it would be worse than folly, it would be irreligion itself, not to separate the good from the bad, and to adopt it in practice.—The Infant School system in England sprung from a suspected source, though it arose in Germany long before, under the auspices of one of the most indefatigable and pious ministers upon record—viz., of Oberline. That system has now received the stamp of universal approbation, while the name of the true English author is almost forgotten.

16. Minds which deviate from the common road, though they may wander in a dreary labyrinth, may sometimes return to the cheerful haunts of men, with rare and curious specimens. Discoveries are generally made at a distance: and he who sits idle in the cottage in which he was born, will seldom benefit his kindred. It may be in the order of Providence, that useful truths may sometimes be brought to light by those who do not acknowledge the source from which they sprung. Mankind may light their torches at the solitary flame, and scatter light through the world.

17. However this may be, truth and justice, and above all, religion, forbid us to attribute to a system what only belongs to an

individual. We have no right to call good evil, or evil good;—to put bitter for sweet, or sweet for bitter. Let every man bear his own burthen, and be answerable for his own sins. Let every system stand, or fall, by its own merits. To use a homely proverb, let the saddle be put upon the right horse; and let us not put a stolen saddle upon the wrong horse, and then deprive the owner of horse as well as saddle.

18. If ever there was a system invented which is, in its very nature, anti-sceptical and anti-satanic; if ever any system, when established, had a tendency to serve the best interests of morality and religion, and to draw down heaven upon earth; if ever any system demanded of its votaries a pure and undefiled religion, a conscience void of offence, an honest heart, an industrious hand, a clear head, brotherly kindness, charity; that system is Co-operation. Visionary and impracticable it may be—that is to be proved: sceptical and irreligious it cannot be—that is a contradiction. It is because men are not honest, not neighbourly, not disinterested, not christians, that they do not co-operate: it is because men have not yet learned to be of one heart and one mind, that they do not co-operate. What shall we say more? It is because men have adopted words for their creed, instead of feelings; because they are sceptical of the gracious designs of a directing Providence,—sceptical of his love, sceptical of his power, sceptical of his wisdom; that they do not embrace Co-operation with open arms, and spread its principles, and aid its practice, with the same holy zeal with which the devoted Twelve first proclaimed the one great truth—**MAN IS IMMORTAL**.

19. If man is immortal, it is not the great, the learned, the rich alone, who are so,—but the poor, the needy, the destitute, the Lazaruses of the world,—and much more, the honest and industrious workman. Why, then, should not that class of men begin to know and feel that their spirits are of a divine origin, and to be unfolded in endless perfection? If surrounded by all the means of comfort and independence, and of human and divine instruction, why should he not be encouraged to use them to his soul's good. Why should he remain any longer in a forlorn and depraved estate, subject to every vicissitude, a prey to every designing knave, social and political?—the tool of every ambitious tyrant, who, strong in the weakness of such human beings, makes them a stepping-stone to a throne of blood? Such, for many a long year, it has been the fate of our momentous times to witness: to witness a host of noble faculties wielded by the cunning of one individual to be the scourge of his species. Such must other generations witness in their turn, unless some system be devised for enlightening, moralizing, and evangelizing the mass of the people. The system of past ages, admirable as it was in many respects, is insufficient for the purpose. Crime and pauperism, war and bloodshed, have been its inseparable companions: and if like causes produce like effects, such will be its future progeny.

20. But that system is destined to have an end. The earth shall not always be a theatre of war, or of a competition of private interests, struggling to pull down the fortune of a neighbour. War shall cease. The ferocious passions of man shall be calmed: his energies shall be directed to nobler objects. Ambition itself shall no longer thirst for any power, but that of doing good. Public opinion, and public sympathy, shall be rightly directed, when the public is rightly taught. The poor shall be enlightened: he shall learn that knowledge is better than ignorance, and that wisdom is above the price of rubies: he shall learn that his own interest and happiness are bound up with those of his fellow creatures, and that his own strength depends upon the strength of his companions;—thus, will he naturally turn his mind to a closer union with them, and this closer union must be that of Co-operation. Men will become christians in practice, they must therefore become christians in theory. The state of the world will carry its own evidence with it: it will be a running commentary upon those remarkable books in which such a state is clearly described. Scepticism can then no longer exist: it will be swallowed up in conviction, and that conviction will be the offspring of Co-operation. [Sickelmore, Brighton.

THE CO-OPERATOR.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNION ARE POWER :

POWER, DIRECTED BY KNOWLEDGE, IS HAPPINESS :

HAPPINESS IS THE END OF CREATION.

No. 25.

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CO-OPERATION IS THE UNKNOWN OBJECT WHICH THE BENEVOLENT PART OF MANKIND HAVE ALWAYS BEEN IN SEARCH OF, FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF THEIR FELLOW CREATURES.

1. Amidst all the "ills that flesh is heir to," there is in human nature a compensating principle—a principle of sympathy with and compassion for the sufferings of our fellow creatures—a principle of *PITY*. This is the secret balm which heals the sorest wounds; which pierces the gloom of dungeons, the chamber of the afflicted, the despair of the oppressed; and diffuses light, cheerfulness, and liberty, among the outcasts of society.

2. Two characters have always been distinguished among men: the fierce, stern, unbending spirit—ambitious of power, tyrannical in its use, and looking at the miseries of man with a dry eye: the other spirit is soft and yielding—follows the steps of misery with an unwearied foot, pours oil and wine into its wounds, shares with it its own comforts and superfluities, or even strips itself to clothe the naked. This spirit, from the time of Nathan to the present hour, has walked upon the earth, thinking none of its possessions to be intrinsically its own, but to be trusted to it as a loan, for the right use of which it was to be responsible to its better feelings—its conscience, and its God.

3. Those err much who denounce human nature as entirely made up of gross selfishness: man is not a creature of any single principle. Such an idea ill suits that endless variety of feeling and action which has been bestowed upon him by his infinite Creator: much less is that supposed single principle, selfishness. Even in the bloody track of the ambitious conqueror, though the murderous assassin follows to plunder the dying and the dead, yet there is still a third warrior behind—the man that conquers himself, to become the Samaritan of the prostrate, whether of friend or foe. To him all men are friends who want his assistance: neither counts he his time, purse, or life dear to him, so he may prove the divine truth—"every man is his brother."

4. That this principle of human nature should appear at first to be obscure, is not to be wondered at: it is retiring, modest and diffident. From its very nature it does not anticipate evil, its business is to follow it, and heal its wounds. It is not bold and presumptuous in inventing plans for preventing evil; for it is con-

trary to its nature to think ill of human nature :—" e. il to him only who evil thinks." It is only one of the melancholy fruits of experience to be convinced, that there are permanent causes of misery in the world; and that unless these causes are known, explained, and rooted out, all the ingenuity, the benevolence, and the religion of man, will in vain attempt to heal the incurable cancer. But how can we doubt of the existence of this kindly principle, when the helpless years of infancy and of old age equally depend upon it for preservation? when even the meridian of life's manhood would sink under zeal, exertion, care, and anxiety; unless, in the hour of retirement, some sympathizing heart soothed and tranquilized the throbbing breast!

5. We almost blush to write in such a strain: but we are fallen in an age in which truths the most pure, the most sublime, the most tender, are doubted, denied, and ridiculed. The minds of men are as the dreams of a sick man—tossed to and fro. Perplexity and amazement have seized the boldest counsellors: and in the general struggle for safety, all principles seem to be lost. We have lived to see the attempt to do good branded with disgrace.

6. Nevertheless it is true, that this principle of pity is inseparable from human nature: that its force and power are continually increasing, as occasions call for its exertion: that it follows the same law of progressiveness as our intellectual faculties: that it is aided in its progress by intellectual improvements: that it gradually systematizes its operations, like other principles: that it loves to congregate and unite with its kindred: that it must therefore ultimately perfect its knowledge of the causes of misery, and their natural remedies; and thus give a death-blow to the arch-enemy of human nature.

7. When civilization was in its infancy, and every event assumed an individual character, the principle of pity, or charity, or benevolence, was individual also. When civilization advanced, and property accumulated, some noble spirits, in every age, thinking to crush the Hydra-headed monsters, poverty and misery, consecrated their wealth to this object, in the shape of a permanent endowment. In our own country, especially, the number of endowments of this kind, and their amount in funds, are past belief. Some of these were violently taken possession of by despotic tyranny; many were abused and perverted; and of the rest, the most valuable by far, seem to be those which turned to the more general diffusion of education and knowledge.

8. The object of these endowments was, generally, to place certain funds at the disposal of one set of people for the benefit of another. The donor relied upon the same principle of charity and justice in the bosom of another which he felt in his own. No one is now surprised, that such an expectation should be disappointed. Whenever we use a second person as an instrument for doing good, we shall assuredly fail, unless we identify his duty with his interest. In the greater number of instances of charitable endowment, the duties and interests of the agents have been at variance; and the objects of the institution have failed. Those have succeeded best in which, as in the case of schools, new interests have sprung up and co-operated with the original objects of the endowment.

9. For the same reason, the good intentions of the legislature on the subject of poor laws have been disappointed, because the interest and duty of all parties concerned have been at variance. In the various societies formed in recent times for the relief of the poor, the same defect exists: and after they have spread themselves out to a certain extent, they seem to leave as wide a gap unoccupied as they have themselves filled up. The best exertions of the best meaning men seem to go for nothing: pauperism and distress increase on

every side : and such fruitless exertions become the subject either of the pity or contempt of the indifferent spectator.

10. What, then, is the conclusion to be derived from all this experience? Is it that the principle of pity in human nature is abortive? that it will for ever fail, as it has done, in attempting to relieve the wants of mankind? Certainly not : but only that it has been mis-directed, and has not yet discovered its true sphere of action. So surely as individual attempts to relieve poverty and misery have hitherto failed, so surely must they fail in future. The friends of benevolence may rest assured, that as fast as they put down poverty in one place, it will start up in another ; and that all their exertions will take nothing from the sum total of its amount.

11. That which makes man poor and vicious, is disunion and neglect. Man comes into the world ignorant and helpless : he is nursed and educated in ignorance and vice : he only becomes known to society when he has reached the age of manhood, and appears before us as a pauper or criminal. Instead of being viewed as a christian, and a brother, he is only treated as an outlaw : he is then, at length, put under a course of discipline and controul, with no view, however, to the improvement of his mind and character ; but merely as a safeguard for a season. It is supposed strangely enough, that the inconvenience of confinement will renovate his mind and feelings, and fill him with the motives and principles of a good man !—a royal road, indeed, to so noble an end ! Had the same discipline and controul been exercised over him from his infancy, had inquiry been made as to the means of his proper education, had his miserable neglect and deficiencies been supplied by proper inspection and teaching, a discipline begun so early might have had some chance of success. If a system begun late in life is supposed capable of forming the character, its chances of success would be increased tenfold by being begun in infancy.

12. One would have thought that so important an object as the prevention of crime, was one worthy of a nation's care ; and that a universal system of training and superintendence in parochial schools, was an obvious expedient. But no such thing. The prevention of crime and the formation of character have been left to chance. It has been left to the charitable and humane ; and their efforts, though small compared with the amount of the evil, have been great and meritorious to themselves. That their success has not been more complete, has been owing to their disunion, and the imperfection of their plans—and greatly too to the low estimate they have made of the value of the working classes. The division of rank tends, no doubt, to encourage pride on the one hand and degradation on the other ; and this, carried to an extreme, denies to the working classes all right to moral and intellectual improvement, or to any thing more than mere subsistence.

13. The low estimate of character and disunion of interests, throws insuperable difficulties in the way of the benevolent ; and so it will continue to do. Upon the present principle the benevolent are to do every thing for the poor, who are to do nothing for themselves. All the superfluous produce of labour is to be placed in the hands of the rich, who are to dole it back to the poor in the way they think most judicious ; the poor are to be incapable of thinking or managing for themselves, and for ever to remain so : hence the abortiveness of all our schemes.

14. How then are the humane and charitable to use and apply Co-operation as a remedy for these great and increasing evils? The method is extremely simple—they are to become Co-operators. Instead of travelling over a wide space to give away a portion of their income, which they can often ill spare, and a great portion of their valuable time, they are to recommend Co-operation to the

poor, to assist them with a small portion only of their money, as subscribers, and with a very moderate portion of their time and talents in managing the accounts and instructing the members. The money, the time, and the teaching, which are now devoted to the poor by a small number of benevolent enlightened persons, and which, as we have said, produce little effect upon the general mass of crime, poverty, and ignorance, if applied upon a Co-operative principle, accumulating permanent property for the poor, improved understandings to enable them to cultivate that property, and improved moral and religious feelings, would, in a few years, work a miraculous change in the face of society.

15. In Co-operative Societies, as well as in others, the most useful, intelligent, and wisest members, will have most influence among the rest. Benevolent persons, therefore, who may join themselves to these societies, will possess all the influence which their superior qualities may deserve. This influence will be seconded by the services of the members, who will become assistants in carrying on any good work which may be proposed. Thus the number of benevolent agents, continually acting upon the poor and the working classes will be increased, and their qualifications for doing good multiplied and improved. The same course by which good flows from man to man will be followed, but the number of streams will be doubled and tripled. The advantage of setting the poor to improve the poor will also be felt, as they are capable of influencing one another to many purposes, which are not within the reach of persons who are placed in rank too high above them.

16. We repeat, that we only wish to give a new and more efficient direction to that divine spirit of charity which has ever been alive to the interests of humanity, and which, in modern times, has exhibited itself in almost every shape in the attempt to give a permanent improvement to the condition of the lower orders. That such improvement is not in itself impossible, is proved by the simple fact, that those orders do at last furnish all the rest with food, clothing and houses. Capital indeed is supplied to them—but this very capital has been produced by themselves. That the lower orders, therefore, can supply themselves abundantly, admits not of a doubt, if they were only properly directed: and this proper direction it is easy for their true friends to give them by uniting with them in co-operative views. That the working classes, when more enlightened and experienced, will co-operate of their own accord, cannot be doubted: they would not else be men, to give away daily the major part of their own earnings, to starve upon the remainder. But we wish to see the time anticipated by the co-operation of the sincerely charitable and humane, and we wish to see these excellent persons adopting a new method of doing infinitely more good with infinitely less labour to themselves.

17. Then will the excellent qualities of many of the upper classes—their humanity, their kindness, their intelligence, their information, their integrity and good principles, be exercised to the highest purposes of which they are capable. They will spread like leaven among the mass—they will cause the green grass to shoot by their fertilising influence, they will multiply their own resemblances among their fellow-creatures—they will have attained the great end of all their labours, the end at which they are constantly labouring only now to be disappointed. So will they be the harbingers of a great and glorious destiny to the human race—so will they cover the earth with knowledge, virtue, religion, happiness, as the waters cover the seas—so will they be worthy disciples of the great Him, who first taught mankind that the noblest attribute of existence was “to go about doing good.”

Sickelmore, Typ. Brighton.

THE CO-OPERATOR.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNION ARE POWER :

POWER, DIRECTED BY KNOWLEDGE, IS HAPPINESS :

HAPPINESS IS THE END OF CREATION.

No. 26.

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1d.

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THE BIBLE.

1. There is a book in the world called the Bible.
2. The above proposition, perhaps, no one will be inclined to dispute. We have stated what we believe to be a fact; and we shall proceed to make some observations upon it, which we think will not displease either the friends or enemies of Co-operation.
3. The Bible is a very ancient book; that is to say, parts of it are very ancient. Parts, indeed, are very modern: so modern, that they belong almost to our own times: so modern, that some persons exclaim—"O yes, we know all that; we can read the same thing in such and such authors; it requires no prophet to write such books; the facts are to be found every where in profane history, as well as sacred; and we owe nothing to the authors for having multiplied our sources of information."
4. Other parts are not quite so modern: and when they are read by the same persons, they remark—"why yes, those facts are certainly spoken of, or alluded to, by some writers besides those of the Bible; but the times are distant; many works have probably perished; events are not so fully recorded as in later times; the history is very meagre; we are not sorry to have all the light we can get, we wish we had more; as far as the same histories are concerned, the Bible seems to agree with other books, and it gives us some information besides, which is not elsewhere to be found."
5. But there are other parts of this Book of which not even this can be said, viz.—that it agrees with other histories of the same period: for after having traced history upwards; and compared the Bible with other documents, to a remote period; we come, at last, to a time of which no history speaks but the Bible. The Bible stands alone, as a fortress in the midst of a desert; within which we must either retreat for safety, or remain without exposed to uncertainty and danger. We must either admit the evidence of this Book, or have none at all. We must either believe this, or believe that there never was a written history previous to the oldest profane histories we have, or that all true historians of that date have perished.

6 The antiquity of this Book, therefore, is very remarkable; but not less remarkable is a certain spirit which runs through it from beginning to end;—which spirit we mean to point out to our readers. Whoever the persons were who composed the different parts of that Book; whatever were their motives and objects; whatever the times they lived in; or the subjects they wrote upon, whether law, religion, history, or poetry; they were all actuated by this spirit among others—they all concurred in one feeling—a feeling which, traced through so many ages, and through so varied a succession of writers, may well be called sublime, from its simplicity and consistency—a feeling for the poor.

7. The Bible speaks of a period prior to that of the division of ranks; it speaks of a time when society constituted but a family; when tribes, and even nations, were but families; when there was no distinction between the rich and the poor, for all were maintained from a common capital. When, however, the distinction of ranks comes to be spoken of; and the family whose history is chiefly detailed, assumes the form and substance of a nation; the same voice which fixes the civil institutions, is lifted up in behalf of the poor. The existence of a class of poor having taken place, and become unavoidable, the lawgiver assumed the office of their protector; and ameliorated, by special provision, what he could not annul.

8. The avarice and rapacity of the rich of those days, and the natural tendency of property to accumulate, were guarded against by a law which prevented the perpetual alienation of small properties. Neither force nor cunning could despoil a man of his little inheritance; for even were it sold for a price, in a few years it must revert again to himself, or his family. With respect to the class still below this, which had no inheritance to dispose of, and whose subsistence therefore was at the caprice of the rich; the lawgiver did all that he could for them, when he gave them a permanent right to the sympathy and charity of the rich; and proclaimed, that upon the respect shewn to this right, would depend in part the prosperity of the nation. Thus three great points are provided for in this legislation: first, the security of all property, by positive law, and by a moral and religious sanction; secondly, the permanency of small possessions; thirdly, the rights of the poor.

9. The first legislator of the Jews seems almost to have had a prophetic eye to the fate which awaited a great portion of society—when the labourer should sink into poverty, degradation, and slavery. He had, indeed, in the country in which he had been educated, beheld the miseries of extreme wealth, and extreme poverty: he had seen the tyranny to which it invariably leads, and the moral degradation which necessarily follows: he had seen his own countrymen gradually losing the pure ideas of one divinity which their fathers had possessed, and driven by slavery into a gross idolatry. He had observed all nations following the same course: riches leading to luxury and crime; and poverty to slavery, superstition, and idolatry.

10. No wonder he should shrink, at first, from the idea of putting himself at the head of a nation of this description. His own mind finely endowed and cultivated, was the last to be disturbed by the dreams of ambition. Far more congenial was it to him, when sick of the heartless contrasts of Pharaoh's palace, to retire to those beautiful plains, where he might raise his spirit to the wonders of nature, and "the God of his fathers;" and in the enjoyment of his own meditations, and a peaceful home, might try to forget his people, their wrongs, and their rights.

11. While dwelling in this comparative solitude, it did not appear

disgraceful in his eyes, to mix himself up with humble occupations: "he fed his flock in Horeb;" and held out a proof to all succeeding ages, that labour is honorable, and that it is possible to combine with laborious occupation, the highest energies of the mind, and the profoundest meditations. When called upon to quit his retirement, by a voice and authority he could not resist, he shewed by the whole tenor of his conduct and legislation, that personal aggrandizement formed no part of his ambition; but that the good of mankind, and particularly of the poor, was the only object of his actions, his thoughts, and his life.

12. After this man had finished his extraordinary career: had redeemed his countrymen from slavery, and presented them with freedom, liberty, and a land of their own: and had fixed the law upon a permanent basis, so that none should alter it at their peril: one of the grand features of its form, being a principle of charity; he was succeeded by a long line of men; the most illustrious of which, were most anxious to preserve this distinguishing principle. Whether under the name of Judges, Kings, or Prophets, it is remarkable that the best and wisest of men, lifted up their voices against that avaricious and grasping spirit in human nature, which is always ready to sacrifice the weak to the strong. Indeed, one of the most memorable and pathetic stories on record, is that of the mighty monarch condescending to confess his own tyranny and injustice, humbling himself as a child under the rebuke of his servant, and offering any atonement which was then in his power to make.

13. In the subsequent history of this people, when they became the prey of surrounding nations, among the causes of national decline enumerated by their writers, the breach of this part of their law—the principle of charity—is particularly dwelt upon. The nation had been settled in their country upon condition; a positive contract had been made; and as Moses had professed to enact the law of charity by a divine authority, so the later prophets appealed to the same authority when they asserted, that national punishments had followed the national violations of this law.

14. Among the writings which have descended to us, from this remarkable people, is a volume of religious poetry. The religious poetry of most ancient nations, consists chiefly in magnifying the warlike power of their supposed deities:—a few of their benevolent qualities are sometimes dwelt upon, as the causes of temporal prosperity. In the Hebrew poetry, the irresistible power of their God is indeed described, (as well it might be,) by persons who attributed the existence of the nation solely to that power:—the beauties of nature are also most sweetly sung, and the whole creation is invited to join in a chorus of praise to its maker. But besides these subjects, the Jewish poets have seized upon others, peculiarly their own: they have attributed to their Deity a character sublimely moral and paternal, and represented him as the guardian of the meanest of his creatures. Of the two great classes into which mankind are divided—the rich and the poor; the God of the Jews is represented, emphatically, as the God of the poor; they are under his especial protection;—tyranny and oppression are his aversion;—and the man who is most secure of his approbation, is he who is hospitable, kind, and merciful to the poor.

15. By the poor in the language of the Bible, are to be understood workmen and the working classes: it is their cause, therefore, which the Bible so strongly pleads. The reasons for the distinction of ranks, which has hitherto prevailed in the world, has never been thoroughly investigated; though capable of the most satisfactory explanation, and a proof of the most refined and consummate wisdom: but it belonged to that same wisdom, to moderate the

evils attending it, by the most express precepts in favour of the workman. Riches are invariably represented as a loan in trust; and the right management of them, as constituting an awful responsibility. So just a precept became him, who was well aware that riches are only the productions of the many, accumulated in the hands of the few. It was not right, in any point of view, that the workman should be deprived of his produce, and left to starve: and yet we must recollect, at the same time, that no ancient book, except the Bible, has maintained this principle in any degree.

16. Far be it from us to presume, that we have penetrated deeper than others into that wonderful Book; or are delivering any thing more than a private opinion, in tracing the analogy between the spirit of the Bible and the spirit of Co-operation. The fact, however, stands so—that the amelioration of the condition of the workman, is the object of both: the one, indeed, only requiring it morally of all who profess to believe in it, and therefore liable to be disobeyed and disappointed: the other, proposing actually to effect it by the simple combination of powers already in action, and which are acknowledged on all hands equal to the purpose.

17. But we may observe farther, that the clear, positive, and constant inclination of the spirit of charity, indicates the will of the author; and with that will, his intentions and objects—which is only saying in other words, that it is the end of providence. We speak to those who believe the Book: his word cannot be void: the precept, the promise and the fulfilment, are separate only in time: they are not arbitrary and random declamation, but they indicate a plan and a system: that plan is the course of providence, and that system its consummation. We may therefore conclude, from a due consideration of that volume, that the amelioration of the condition of the poor, or working classes; the universal reign of peace, harmony, and plenty; of virtue and religion: is the end of providence.

18. We may also observe, that such views do not rest upon mere inference, but are plainly spoken of in various parts of the Volume. Time is anticipated; and as men in these days seem to behold society assuming new and more splendid forms, judging from the rapid triumphs of arts and sciences over obstacles hitherto deemed insurmountable, so, in those days, some few highly favoured men poured out their prophetic conceptions, derived from a higher source, to be at once the delight, the consolation and the hope of the world.

19. If these things be so—if we too breathe the “spirit of faith, hope and charity”—if we deem the improvement of our fellow creatures desirable and possible, and that we have discovered a new and superior method of promoting it, what, it may be asked, is the duty, what the office, we are called upon to discharge? The answer is, to afford them that assistance which their ignorance and inexperience require, and which our education and knowledge qualify us to impart. When the different classes of society shall be engaged in a common object, alike beneficial to both, their mutual jealousies will cease. Each will bring his labour or his knowledge to a common fund, and find his happiness in promoting the common good. By the mutual interchange of good offices, a feeling similar to that which binds people together in families, will spring up; and if a tree be known by its fruit, that fruit must be pleasant which is grown upon the stock of intelligence watered by affection.

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THE CO-OPERATOR.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNION ARE POWER :

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HAPPINESS IS THE END OF CREATION.

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CHRISTIANITY.

1. In our last number we took notice of a peculiar feature in the Bible; which, though it has not been entirely overlooked by religious professors, has never received that attention which it merits; nor has it been traced out to all the consequences which legitimately flow from it. This feature ought also to secure for the Bible a hearty reception among all the sincere friends of the working classes; because, considering the authority of that book in the world, it might be made the most powerful ally of the true philanthropist in ameliorating their condition. What is wanted in the present day, is not merely the discovery of new principles, but a selection and new application of old ones. Many important truths are scattered through the writings of former men, which lie undistinguished in the common mass: these want to be drawn out and applied under the present favorable circumstances of the world.

2. So it is with the Bible. The spirit of that book is eminently favorable to universal benevolence and improvement, if the spirit of the readers did but respond to the spirit within: but as this has rarely been the case, the inferior lessons have hitherto chiefly been studied, leaving the superior ones yet to be developed and reduced to practice. When they shall be properly appreciated and applied, we may then expect to see in the world, by the joint operation of divine and human authority—of religion and science, a state of comfort, perfection, and happiness, to which we have hitherto been strangers.

3. In speaking of the Bible, we have chiefly had in view that part of it which is called the Old Testament: but there is another part, called the New Testament, of which the contents are still more extraordinary than those of the Old. That spirit in the Old Testament, which pleads the cause of the poor with so much earnestness and authority, lives also in the New. So far there is an identity of purpose and object. But there is a new spirit in the Gospel, and a new character given to the poor. In the Old Testament the poor are merely protected from the tyranny of the rich: in the New, they are selected as a chosen class, to teach, instruct, and inform those very rich. In the Old, the poor are represented as a class helpless and friendless: in the New, they are exalted,

and even glorified;—they were endowed with the highest powers, even supernatural; and taught to look forward to the noblest perfection.

4. The Gospel was not born in a palace: it did not go forth from kings, princes, or nobles. Its cradle was the cottage of a mechanic, and its irresistible heralds were from among the lowest of the people: its first addresses were made to the poor, its miraculous powers were exerted in their favour, its purest precepts were explained to them, as fully competent to understand and receive them: its high principles of character were laid down for their imitation, and its sublime promises were made to them, as their natural inheritance.

5. The Gospel, therefore, took the poor by the hand: it lifted them "out of the mire:" it made them "kings and princes:" it found them poor, it left them rich: it found them weak, it left them strong: it found them degraded, it left them exalted: it found them men, it left them sons of God: it found them clay, it left them immortal spirits. The Gospel has entirely changed the face of the world, the destiny of the poor, and the character of human nature itself: without it, we could not but despair of the improvement of the world; with it, that improvement becomes a first principle in philosophy: without it, even if we admitted the progress of science, we could not admit that of the mass of mankind; with it, we become acquainted with a new law of providence, viz.—a perpetual progress, not only of science, but of mankind of all ranks, and especially of the poor, towards an endless perfection of character and happiness.

6. This peculiar principle in the Gospel has been much overlooked. The world is indebted to the poor for the Gospel: they first received and taught it, and sealed their testimony to it with their blood! "Not many rich, not many mighty," were then called: and even the wisdom of the learned was considered foolishness. But at length, the rich and the learned having elected themselves the professed guardians of the volume of the poor, have so interpreted its comprehensive and exalted declarations, as to leave nothing for the poor in this world, as a class, but poverty and ignorance, and the consequences of them—vice and misery. What prospect they may have of happiness in a future life, without the means—by a more careful education—of forming that character here upon which happiness will there depend, it is painful to contemplate.

7. This state of things is not the religion or the principle of the Gospel. The principle of the Gospel was to put an end to that immense disparity of condition and comfort which till then existed in the world: to soften the ferocity and tyranny of the ambitious part of mankind: to proscribe the selfishness of the wealthy: to humble the proud oppressor: and to proclaim the rights of the defenceless and the poor. However high and mighty a man might be, it boldly told him that in the eye of Heaven he was but dust and ashes, that he was responsible for every exercise of his power, and that the lowest man with honest principle was greater than the highest without it.

8. The state of the first christians, generally, approached very near to a true Co-operation, and in some cases attained to it entirely. The community of goods which was at first enjoined upon all, united with the rule that the wilfully idle should not be allowed a share of support, proves that a provision was made for labour as well as for charity. A particular sect, called the Essenes, carried these principles into a regular organised system, and subsisted for some ages upon a pure Co-operative plan. They seem, at last, to have become extinct from the political revolutions of the world, and the general state of ignorance upon all mechanical and scientific

subjects. The motives of their union were too exclusively those of duty; which, unless connected with a general taste for useful knowledge, is liable to degenerate into superstition. Their existence, however, is a proof how easily the spirit of the Gospel, when first ushered into the world, drew its votaries into Co-operation, and how favorable it must ever continue to be to such unions.

9. Co-operation, besides proceeding upon the principle that labour is the only source of wealth, affirms also that the faculties and intellectual powers of the workman are the same as those of all other classes of society, and as capable of improvement from cultivation. The spirit of the Gospel does the same: for that was the first voice that taught the workman his own value and dignity, both here and hereafter. Co-operation promises the workman an improvement of his temporal comforts, and an addition to temporal happiness, by a union with those of a kindred spirit, and by the mutual interchange of the charities of life. The Gospel recommends precisely the same kindly feeling, the same mutual assistance, and promises a mental satisfaction in consequence of it, which can spring from no other source.

10. Co-operation is inconsistent with the selfish passions of our nature: with all low and idle pursuits: with all waste of precious time: with all indulgences in mere animal gratification: with all infringement of the rights and properties of others: with all malice and ill will towards them, for any difference of taste, pursuit, or opinion. We need not say, that on all these points the spirit of the Gospel is precisely the same; and that one of the chief obstacles in the way of the establishment of both is the same, viz.—the selfishness of human nature.

11. The spirit of the Gospel, and the spirit of Co-operation, are both of them new principles, introduced into the world at different periods, and of course upon a different authority; but both opposed to the common spirit of the world, both holding out peculiar rewards for the adoption of their principles, and both contending with peculiar difficulties, in consequence of their opposing the selfish principles of man, and appealing to his higher feelings and faculties, which are not yet sufficiently cultivated to be alive to the importance of the cause. The author of the Gospel was too wise to make positive institutions, because the progressive nature of man makes all institutions temporary. Institutions themselves must be for ever changing, in order to be for ever improving: but there may be a spirit in all institutions which may remain the same, while the form in which it acts may vary. This spirit has been wonderfully seized in the Gospel—a spirit of universal love, alone sufficient to prove it divine: and this spirit has infused itself more or less into all the institutions which have been formed in christian countries; and is still growing in importance, as it grows in age.

12. It is this spirit which has, in fact, given rise to the attempt at Practical Co-operation: it saw the wretched state of suffering to which many of the working classes were reduced: it saw the intrinsic value of their labour: the improveable nature of their intellectual faculties: the extraordinary assistance they might derive from the use of modern machinery: the wonderful produce of labour when ably directed: and it cherished the hope, that by uniting them amicably into one body, they might succeed in improving their minds, and insuring a comfortable independence.

13. There is something in this idea consolatory to the friend of man, and which bids him not despair of the ultimate happiness of his kind. Many petty attempts have been made, by benevolent persons, to relieve the wants of the lower classes, and to promote their comfort: but no one ever imagined, before the present day, that workmen were themselves capable of looking so far as to adopt

a system of mutual labour, support, and instruction, in order to provide for themselves upon a permanent plan. The spirit which prompted this, is a new spirit; as much as the steam engine is a new mechanical power. Like other new powers and machines, it will require many experiments to bring it to practical perfection; but when one experiment has succeeded, imitation will become easy, and mankind will reap the benefit of it for ever!

14. In endeavouring to trace an analogy between the spirit of the Gospel and of Co-operation, we neither wish to degrade a divine institution by comparing it with a human one, nor to press into our cause an ally which does not naturally belong to us. While we have selected certain points of comparison, in which the Gospel is favorable to us, we are well aware that its grandest claims are of a still higher nature: and while some Co-operators (unfortunately for the cause,) have pretended to doubt of the real truth of the Gospel, and have imagined themselves capable of making a new gospel out of Co-operation, we have that opinion of the force of evidence accumulated upon the subject, as to attribute their doubts to the same fertile source of scepticism to which we attribute the scepticism of the enemies of Co-operation, viz.—to ignorance.

15. But believing in the divine truth of the Gospel, we have a right to take up its principles, and apply them in a new age, to a new order of things. If the age in which we live affords us new means of improving the characters of mankind, and of securing to all the comforts and conveniences of life, it is but a poor interpretation of the spirit of the Gospel to argue, that because there were poor in those days, therefore there ought always to be a class of forlorn outcasts. Nothing, indeed, is more hostile to the spirit of the Gospel than such an argument: nothing more congenial with the spirit of it, than that now at length the united action of the spirit of the Gospel, and the spirit of modern intelligence, should revisit the poor, from whom the Gospel sprung, and give them a new rank in the scale of this world, just as the Gospel itself once gave them a new rank in the creation of God.

16. The time is fast coming when mere theory on the subject of human virtue, happiness, and religion, will not satisfy human wants. The man of theory must be also a man of practice; he must not merely talk, he must practice: he must live by the side of his fellow christian and teach him by example, as well as by words. The author of christianity was not a mere teacher: he lived with the people he wished to instruct: they saw him in private, as well as public: they became familiar with his character, till it wove itself partially into their own. Such must one day be the character and conduct of the disciple of this master: he must teach by his life, and must give to the circle around him, the vital impress of his own sentiment and his own intelligence.

17. This idea is not imaginary. Already here and there individuals exist of a true noble character—who devote their fortune, talents, time, to the instruction and moral improvement of those around them. Years have been given to these experiments, which promise more and more fruit as they advance in progress. They have benefited individuals, they must hereafter benefit society at large. We can do no more than allude to them here; but our own hopes in favor of Co-operation, would not have existed without a knowledge of such experiments. Happy the persons who commenced them! Happy those who shall apply such knowledge in their own immediate neighbourhood! And far happier those who shall succeed in proving, that such experiments united with a Gospel spirit, are sufficient for the success of a Co-operative community!

THE CO-OPERATOR.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNION ARE POWER :

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HAPPINESS IS THE END OF CREATION.

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EDUCATION—MANAGEMENT—CONCLUSION.

1. In recommending Co-operation to the attention of the working classes, it was necessary to shew what we may call the physical possibility of it: that is, that workmen possess already, within themselves, the materials, in their labour, of wealth, and of every enjoyment they can possibly wish for. We even went farther. We said, workmen might co-operate or not, as they pleased: they might grow rich or not, as they pleased; they might remain, if they pleased, as poor as famishing hundreds are at present: but one thing they could not help—and that is, filling the world with an infinite abundance of food, manufactures, houses, and comforts of every description. A man may not have sense enough to co-operate, to work for himself, but he must have sense enough not to starve; and to prevent his starving, he must work for another; and that other will take good care to save out of that labour enough to make himself comfortable, or even rich.

2. This ground is so strong that the co-operator can never be driven from it. No one can deny it. No one has attempted to deny it. No one ever produced a particle of food, clothing, or lodging, but the workman; and no one ever will. Palaces may be built, steam engines constructed, railways laid down, ships navigated, kingdoms conquered, but all must be done by the labour of the workman; without whom, engineers would plan in vain, and generals issue their orders to the winds.

3. But in taking our stand upon this ground, we never supposed, for a moment, that workmen could co-operate with minds such as they possess at present—without knowledge, without information, without the power of thinking: as well might we suppose, that corn would grow without the plough, thread be made without the spinner, or bricks co-operate spontaneously to build a house. In pointing out the physical powers of workmen, we have always most carefully insisted collaterally upon the absolute necessity of knowledge, before success can be expected; and, by way of encouragement, have occasionally asserted the facility with which it may be acquired: in doing which, we have not gone one step farther than what we know to be fact.

4. In Switzerland, a gentleman of the name of Fellenberg has been employed for many years, upwards of thirty, in the education of workmen. He has a farm, on which their education takes place. They are employed chiefly in agricultural labour. They begin to labour as soon as their strength permits; and the kind and quality of labour they perform, is suited to their age and powers. The farm

is supplied with workshops, in which every machine used on the premises is manufactured. The children are also taught these trades, and various others necessary or useful to their own comfort or to their future destination in the world. A moderate portion of the day is devoted to schools, in which the elements of a useful education are taught—reading, writing, arithmetic, geography, history, geometry, land measuring, botany.

5. In these schools the master is not a mere master to teach letters, and keep order with a stick. After school hours he accompanies the boys to their labour: he assists and instructs them in that: he makes the labour a source of instruction: he teaches, by conversation, all the knowledge connected with the employment of the day. The children acquire a double interest in their labour, for it is the source of profit and of knowledge: they understand the mechanical principles of the machines they use, the natural history of all the plants they cultivate in the field or garden, the qualities and uses of all the wild plants and trees of the country, and the nature of the minerals and rocks by which they are surrounded. When they return from their labour they bring home specimens of plants to form herbariums, and of minerals to form museums. They also learn the medical properties of such plants as are used in curing diseases, and the mode of preparing them for that purpose.—Thus every employment tends to a useful, practical, interesting end.

6. Fellenberg takes the children when extremely young, and keeps them till they reach the age of twenty-one: they are then able to go into the world and earn their own living: they either go into service as workmen, or as superintendents and managers of estates, for which many of them are well qualified. Though instructed in many kinds of knowledge, they have not been brought up above their station, for their habits of living and clothing have been those of the workman: they are, therefore, not discontented with their station, but they stand a better chance in the race of life than those who have been less usefully educated. To crown the whole, they are men of superior character.—Fellenberg considers, that a moral and religious character is the most valuable possession of every man, and the paramount object of all education.—Life consists not merely in living, but in **LIVING WELL**.

7. Fellenberg is a christian: he loves his neighbour as himself. With this motive, in the early part of the French revolution, he exerted himself to turn the public events of the day to the advantage of his country. He hoped, that improved public institutions would materially promote the welfare of the people. He soon perceived, that a revolution was a game of selfishness, folly, cruelty, and tyranny. He quitted public life to attempt his favorite end—public good through the improvement of private character. In this he has completely succeeded. He began with taking charge of a few children, orphans and beggars. His plans prospered: his numbers increased. He has now upwards of a hundred children, of the working classes, learning to labour, and acquiring knowledge and character.

8. The material part of the story is yet to come. Fellenberg does all this without expense. The labour of the children repays all the expenses of their education: at eight years old they begin to labour; at twelve, they maintain themselves; after that age their labour yields a surplus produce, which increases till they leave the school; and by the time they are twenty-one years old, they have repaid all the expenses of their education. This is one of the most important practical problems which have ever been solved in human nature. Children may be educated without any expense to any one, but themselves: their own labour will do it, which only requires a proper direction, which direction has been discovered and proved by Fellenberg.

9. In this divine path of love and good sense, Fellenberg has enriched himself, no less than he has enriched others: he has

doubled the productive power of his land. No land in Switzerland yields any thing like the produce which his does. He has increased the number and value of his buildings. He has collected libraries and museums of natural history, mineralogy, and geology, and models of all kinds of useful machines. The labour of his schools has about doubled the value of his property.

10. This, then, is the plan upon which co-operators should proceed with their children. A piece of land should be purchased, upon which moderate accommodation should be erected. A master should be obtained from Fellenberg, under whose direction the children should be educated, be instructed how to maintain themselves, and be continually adding to the convenience and value of the buildings. —Fellenberg's great object now is to provide such masters, who may take charge of similar establishments in other countries besides his own; and thus diffuse through the world, a system simple in itself, easy in practice, and invaluable in its result.

11. MANAGEMENT.—As co-operators cannot attain their ultimate object without an improved education, so neither can they attain their immediate object without good management. As the ultimate object is to work for themselves upon their own capital, so the immediate one is to invest their money in some more profitable manner than the Savings' Bank; and in some manner, also, which shall afford a constant occupation for the members in the employment. For this purpose trade has been fixed upon, the profits of which are of course much greater than the usual interest of money. The profits of trade, however, depend very greatly upon good management in buying, both as to quality and quantity: on the one hand there is an advantage in making large purchases; on the other, there is a loss in having too much dead stock. The secret of all trade is a quick return: a small capital frequently turned over, is more profitable than a large one lying dead.

12. The necessity of buying and selling for ready money only, is absolute. A society dealing in credit, must infallibly be ruined in a given number of months; which any ordinary person might predict, by knowing the extent of their dealings. This point is now so well known from experience, as well as theory, that it is unnecessary to dwell upon it.

13. Another point of vital importance, is an accurate system of accounts. In this all societies are liable at first to be deficient, because no one is aware of the necessity of accounts who has not been concerned in business. People of little concerns trust to memory, which answers their purpose sufficiently: but when business increases, or when a man has to manage the accounts of a second person besides, accuracy becomes indispensable. A society must keep a subscription account, which shall contain an account with each member; and a duplicate account of this, shewing the sum total of all subscriptions. In the shop they must keep a book, ruled in seven columns: one, the date; two, the goods purchased; three, the price; four, the total selling price; five, the selling price of small quantities; six, another column for the date; seven, the amount of money received in the shop, which amount may be put in, daily or weekly. By comparing the amount for which the goods ought to sell, with the amount of money received, the difference ought to shew the stock on hand.—This system of book-keeping is sufficient for a Society proceeding on ready-money principles; but it must be persevered in with daily accuracy, or the Society will soon be all confusion and ruin. This system will shew at any time, whether any profit is made, or whether it is greater than the common interest of money.

14. When a Society has capital enough to employ any of its members, another system of accurate daily accounts must be adopted for that department; and so on for every new branch of business entered into. Should a Society ever occupy land in common, a system of daily calculation of the value of labour

performed, and the consumption of members, must be rigidly adhered to, as the only means of being secure that the produce will exceed the consumption. Without a minute inspection of this kind, no body of men can pretend to have a common consumption. The wages which a workman receives weekly, are only a ticket entitling him to a certain quantity of food for that week. With this in his hand he can easily calculate the allowance for each day. If the mode of remuneration were to be altered and no wages or weekly labour ticket were to be issued, some other measure of consumption must be substituted; and if the daily measure were fixed too high for the produce, the inevitable consequence must be starvation before the end of the year.

15. These remarks are the result of experience, and the failure of all attempts hitherto made at practical Co-operation, may be traced to the want of a rigid system of accounts, and a minute calculation of the relation between production and consumption. Before Co-operators therefore enter upon the last step of their labours, the occupation of land, they must prepare themselves for it by long habits of accurate book-keeping applied to every part of their business, and these habits must be familiar to all or most of the members.

16. CONCLUSION.—It is time now to draw these papers to a conclusion. The object for which they were commenced has been attained. The principles of Co-operation have been disseminated among the working classes, and made intelligible to them. The certainty of success, if those principles be acted upon, has been, we believe we may say, demonstrated; and three hundred Societies have started up to put these principles to the test. These Societies constitute a new and a grand experiment, the results of which cannot but be interesting and instructive, whether they prove or disprove the practicability of the system.

17. The course which we originally meant to steer, has been somewhat modified by circumstances; and the latter part of our reflections has been less practical than we could have wished. When Co-operation had made a certain progress, and attracted some degree of public notice, it became an object of attack partly foolish and partly malignant. It seemed desirable, therefore, to endeavour to trace the consequences of successful Co-operation upon the public welfare. In doing this we became less practically useful to the persons for whom we had originally written: yet it seemed desirable to remove ignorance, to disarm prejudice, and to conciliate the good will of those who might be serviceable to the cause. In the mean time the cause itself had taken deeper root, and new advocates had arisen in its favour; and it is to be hoped that their efforts will be more practical and more influential than those of the humble writer of these pages.

18. "The Co-operator," therefore, takes his leave of his brethren in the same spirit in which he began—the spirit of good will to all mankind. In this spirit he has endeavoured to instruct, enlighten, and direct them into the true road to independence. If he has failed, it has been not for want of the will, but of the power. He has meant well, and executed his intentions according to the measure of his ability, and not without sacrifices on his part. It remains now to leave the question to Time, the final arbiter of all disputes and the great experimenter of the world. Should he reverse the judgment of the "Co-operator," we are well assured it will only be to establish a still more glorious system, when the world shall have been fully prepared for it. For Time is but the servant of Nature, and Nature is but the manifestation of an Intelligence, as boundless in benevolence as in power.

FINIS.

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LETTERS OF DR. KING ON
CO-OPERATION



DR. WILLIAM KING.

From the Bust at the Royal Pavilion, Brighton.

LETTERS OF DR. KING ON CO-OPERATION.

The letters which follow were written by Dr. King at different periods of his life. The first, on the subject of Mechanics' Institutions, appeared in the *Brighton Herald*, on October 22nd, 1825, and was reprinted for general distribution as a small eight-page pamphlet. A copy of this pamphlet is in the Brighton Public Library. The letter addressed to Henry Brougham, M.P., was printed by Henry Pitman in the *Co-operator* for January, 1863, and reprinted by Holyoake in his *History of Co-operation* (Vol. II., page 592). The letter to Thomas Hirst was first printed in the *Co-operative News* on January 23rd, 1892. This letter, given to Holyoake by Mr. W. R. Croft, of Huddersfield, was included by Dr. Hans Müller in his article on "Dr. William King and his place in the History of Co-operation," published in the second *Year Book of International Co-operation*, issued in 1913 by the International Co-operative Alliance. In the same article Dr. Müller quoted extracts from four of Dr. King's letters to Henry Pitman, originally printed in the *Co-operator*. The letters addressed by Dr. King to Henry Crabb Robinson contain no direct reference to co-operation, but are printed here because they reveal the character of the writer. These letters were first printed in 1869 by Thomas Sadler, Ph.D., who edited the three volumes containing selections from Robinson's *Diary, Reminiscences, and Correspondence*.

I.

W. K. to the Editor, *Brighton Herald*.

8 Marlborough Place, Brighton,
October 21st, 1825.

Sir,—On Tuesday evening last a meeting of the Brighton artists and mechanics was held at the Carpenters' Arms, West Street, to pass resolutions favourable to the Bradford workmen* and raise a subscription for them. The place chosen for this meeting being opposite to the Mechanics' Institution, there seemed to be an apprehension on the part of some of the friends of that Institution, and a prejudice on the

* In 1825 the Bradford woolcombers and weavers made a "notable stand" against a proposed reduction of wages. They were defeated, and the strike ended in "the permanent break-up of the union." See "The History of Trade Unionism," by S. and B. Webb, 1911, p. 100.

part of others, who are doubtful of its tendency, that the views of both would be considered the same. Having taken much interest in the welfare of the latter society, I was induced to attend the meeting to make myself acquainted with its objects and principles. The conclusion pressed upon my mind from what I heard was to be more than ever persuaded that the *objects, principles, and proceedings* of the two are *essentially and fundamentally* opposed.

Mechanics' Institutions propose, by modest and patient inquiry and study, to dispel the ignorance in which we are born, and which is the enemy of private and social happiness, and the parent of error and crime ; to foster a love of truth ; to acquire a more perfect acquaintance with our callings and duties, and thus to make ourselves worthier members of society.

Meetings of the other kind propose to decide upon partial evidence ; to judge without inquiry ; to teach without knowledge ; to rouse the angry passions of our nature, and then give them their own direction. Patient inquiry and modest conclusions, which are the essence of one plan, are unknown to the other. In the one they are necessary friends ; in the other they are necessary enemies.

We all know that a vast quantity of useful practical knowledge, in every department of science, has been accumulated by our forefathers ; that those who have collected this, and those who have applied it, have been considered, universally, as the greatest friends to their country ; that they who have introduced among us the inventions of other nations have been honoured and rewarded by the public voice and the public purse, and that the independence of our beloved country, considering the limited nature of her soil, native productions, and population, depends upon the education and intelligence of the people at large, and upon their being able to keep ahead of other nations in the career of useful practical knowledge.

This knowledge has hitherto been confined comparatively to a few, and to those few we are indebted for our success in war, and for our glory in literature and science. The natural fruits of science and knowledge, as of religion, are peace, order, and tranquility. The children of science are not willingly found even in the ranks of ambition. The fact is, they have purer,

more exquisite, and more permanent enjoyments of their own, and when, happily, science and religion are united in the same breast, they open such sublime views of the universe and of Providence, that wealth and honours, except when subservient to human improvement and happiness, sink into insignificance.

If this knowledge could be rendered universal this character would also be universal, *i.e.*, the character of peace, the love of self-improvement, and a desire to improve the condition, moral and intellectual, of all our fellow-creatures; in short, to reduce to practice the theory of ages, "To love our neighbours as ourselves."

There was a time when the *summum bonum* was the earnest inquiry of philosophers. The light of revelation and the diffusion of bibles have now put the solution of this problem in the hands of every peasant. And so simple is the truth, when once discovered, and so literally is it true that HIS MERCY IS OVER ALL HIS WORKS, that the purest religion is now often found among the poorest, and even "he that runs may read."

May not, then, the means of acquiring useful knowledge become in time so simple that the poorest artisan may learn all that belongs to his art and all that belongs to his lot? If the Almighty has graciously opened one door of knowledge, which man could never have unlocked, and of which not one mortal had ever guessed that it would be opened, is it unreasonable to expect that other doors, which are already ajar, and display, to a few, inexhaustible beauties and wonders, will, in due time, be flung wide open and that all mankind will behold them and burst forth into one general chorus of praise and ecstasy?

Such, I devoutly trust, will be the fruits of Mechanics' Institutions. Knowledge and science, after diffusing themselves among the upper and educated classes, are descending among the lower. Having ameliorated and softened the former, we cannot doubt of their producing similar effects among the latter. Within my own memory, unless a man, at the University, were intoxicated three days in a week he was not considered a gentleman. At the present moment the proof is exactly the reverse.

Twenty years ago, by the testimony of Mr. Bramah, before a committee of the House of Commons, out of

a hundred of his workmen TEN were habitual drunkards ; at present he has not one, and the men in the factory make rules for each other's good behaviour. When questioned as to the cause of this he replied, *education and knowledge*. "What! do you mean to say that you find the best educated to be the best workmen and the best conducted?" "Invariably so."

I lament that some of the educated classes, who owe all their success and character in life to their education and knowledge, are doubtful of the effects of knowledge upon the class from which they themselves sprung.

Strange infatuation! like that of those who, having found a Saviour for themselves, are afraid of exhibiting him to others; who, being entrusted with the key of knowledge, have let themselves through the door, and turned the key upon the rest of mankind—upon their own brethren!

Could these institutions be viewed with a favourable eye by their natural guardians, the sons of the same ALMA MATER, their fruits would rapidly thrive and come to maturity. But in the absence of human sympathy there is, we will trust, "an eye that watches over them;" and, perhaps, like the oak of a northern clime, the longer its growth, and the more intemperate the skies, the tougher is its fibre, and the firmer and more immovable its roots; so these institutions, if left to their own energies and resources, may acquire a strength and direction, under the Divine Blessing, which the artificial nursing and moulding of human patronage could never have given them.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

(Signed) W. KING.

II.

W. K. to Henry Brougham, M.P.*

Brighton, December 12th, 1828.

Sir,—A number of persons, chiefly of the working class, having read several works on the subject of co-operation, conceived the possibility of reducing it to practice in some shape or other. They accordingly formed themselves into a society; and met once a week for reading and conversation on the subject; they also began a weekly subscription of 1d. The members who joined were considerable—at one time upwards of 170; but, as happens in such cases, many were lukewarm and indifferent, and the numbers fluctuated. Those who remained began at once an evident improvement of their minds. When the subscription amounted to £5, it was invested in groceries, which were retailed to the members. Business kept increasing. The first week the amount sold was half-a-crown; it is now about £38. The profit is about 10 per cent; so that a return of £20 a week pays all expenses, besides which the members have a large room to meet in and work in. About six months ago, the society took a lease of twenty-eight acres of land, about nine miles from Brighton, which they cultivate as a garden and nursery out of their surplus capital. They employ on the garden, out of seventy-five members, four, and sometimes five, men, with their own capital. They pay the men at the garden 14s. a week, the ordinary rate of wages in the county being 10s., and of parish labourers 6s. The men are also allowed rent and vegetables. They take their meals together. One man is married and his wife is housekeeper.

The principle of the society is—the value of labour. The operation is by means of a common capital. An individual capital is an impossibility to the workman,

* Henry Brougham, M.P., afterwards Lord Brougham (1778-1868), was a sincere friend of the working classes, and a strong advocate of national education. He helped to establish the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge (1827). As Lord Chancellor, he was largely instrumental in getting the Reform Bill passed in 1832. In 1857 he helped to found the National Association for the Promotion of Social Science. He was a close friend of Robert Owen, who prepared five papers for the first meeting of this Association, and who made his last public appearance at its meeting at Liverpool in 1858.

but a common capital not. The advantage of the plan is that of mutual insurance ; but there is an advantage beyond, viz., that the workman will thus get the whole produce of his labour to himself ; and if he chooses to work harder or longer, he will benefit in proportion. If it is possible for men to work for themselves, many advantages will arise. The other day they wanted a certain quantity of land planted before the winter. Thirteen members went from Brighton early in the morning, gave a day's work, performed the task, and returned home at night. The man who formerly had the land, when he came to market, allowed himself 10s. to spend. The man who now comes to market for the society is contented with 1s. extra wages. Thus these men are in a fair way to accumulate capital enough to find all the members with constant employment ; and, of course, the capital will not stop there, other societies are springing up. Those at Worthing and Findon are proceeding as prosperously as ours, only on a smaller scale. If co-operation be once proved practicable the working classes will soon see their interest in adopting it. If this goes on, it will draw labour from the market, raise wages, and so operate upon pauperism and crime. All this is pounds, shillings, and pence ; but another most important feature remains. The members see immediately the value of knowledge. They employ their leisure time in reading and mutual instruction. They have appointed one of their members librarian and schoolmaster ; he teaches every evening. Even their discussions involve both practice and theory, and are of a most improving nature. Their feelings are of an enlarged, liberal, and charitable description. They have no disputes, and feel towards mankind at large as brethren. The *élite* of the society were members of the Mechanics' Institution, and my pupils, and their minds were no doubt prepared there for this society. It is a happy consummation.

In conclusion, I beg to propose to your great and philanthropic mind the question as to how such societies may be affected by the present state of the law ; or how far future laws may be so framed as to operate favourably to them. At the same time, they ask nothing from any one but to be let alone, and nothing from the law but protection. As I have had the opportunity of watching every step of this society, I consider their case proved ; but others at a distance

will want further experience. If the case is proved, I consider it due to you, sir, as a legislator, philosopher, and the friend of man, to lay it before you. This society will afford you additional motives for completing the Library of Useful Knowledge—the great forerunner of human improvement.

III.

W. K. to Thomas Hirst.*

2 Regent's Square, Brighton,
April 3rd, 1833.

Dear Mr. Hirst,

Your letter, dated March 25th, is very acceptable to me. I cannot attend the Congress, because I cannot leave home nor make myself a public man. Since I had your first letter I have had one from Mr. Pare,† sending me the vote of thanks to the author of the *Co-operator*, and requesting a new edition. I have replied to him, and proposed to send him all the *Co-operators* on hand, to be disposed of to the best advantage, and sending me the proceeds, if any. I thought this might take trouble off your hands. I recommended that he should send me a copy of the *Co-operator*, with notes and criticisms, and I would endorse it, but I declined taking the risk of publication. I urged strongly upon him the necessity of making morals and religion the basis of all attempts at improving or benefiting the working classes. I am too old now to mince matters on that subject. When co-operation was in its infancy there were many reasons for keeping the phrase "morals and religion" in the background. Circumstances are now altered. Some have now proved their title to respect and con-

* Thomas Hirst, of Huddersfield, was an active member of the Huddersfield Co-operative Trading and Manufacturing Association, started in 1829. He attended the early Congresses, and presided over the Fourth Congress, held at Liverpool, in 1832.

† William Pare (1805-1873), of Birmingham, was an intimate friend of Robert Owen, and a prominent leader of the early Co-operative Movement. He was secretary to the First Co-operative Congress held at Manchester in 1831, and to the Congress held at London in 1860. Once the first co-operative "missionary," Pare lived to become the first secretary to the Central Board, now the Co-operative Union of Great Britain and Ireland.

fidence. They have borne the brunt of the fight, and they have now full right to state the inward principles which have actuated them. Besides, we have had experience, and we can state with more confidence the causes of failure.

Your faithful friend and brother,
(Signed) W. KING.

IV.

W. K. to Henry Crabb Robinson.*

August 17th, 1853.

. . . Robertson's† theology had an air of grandeur and truthfulness about it, which won all hearts—the hearts of all who filled his chapel; while he had to pay the common price of following truth which his Master paid, viz., to endure envy, jealousy, and malignity.

V.

W. K. to Henry Crabb Robinson.

23 Montpelier Road, Brighton,
October 19th, 1853.

Many thanks for your two letters; the first, with the enclosure—the notice of Robertson. I have lent it to several, who have had great pleasure in the perusal of it. It says as much as can be said of him in that compass. You say, *De minimis non curat lex*; I say, *De minimis curat rex*. If he did not care *de minimis*, how could I exist? . . .

* Henry Crabb Robinson (1775-1867) was throughout his life the companion and friend of famous men and women. He knew Goethe, Schiller, Lafayette, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Southey, Lamb, and other great writers and artists intimately, and the volumes containing his recollections and reminiscences make fascinating reading.

† Frederick William Robertson (1816-53) the great English preacher and theologian, was made incumbent of Trinity Chapel, Brighton, in 1847, and continued to live in that town until his death. His treatment of religious subjects caused him to be attacked by more orthodox teachers. He was also denounced as a revolutionary in consequence of the part he took in the establishment of a local institute for the working men of Brighton.

I agree with you—your memoir raises doubts rather than satisfies them ; but that is all that can be done at present. We are tired of the old, and looking for the new. Time is an element in all human changes. A church is a stepping-stone in the great ladder which men are climbing, to answer the primeval question, What is God? All the systems from the beginning are the answers to this question in their generations. When Dr.— proclaims a hell of eternal punishment, that is *his* answer. He thinks it is in THE Gospel—*i.e.*, *his* gospel ; it is his conception of God. . . .

Dr. Parr was a step in advance. He thought the Unitarians might be saved, but they must be *scorched* first. He delighted in drinking hob-a-nob with a man who was sure to be scorched before he could be fit company for him. The fact is, we conform the gospel to our minds, and not our minds to the gospel. That is Churchdom. . . .

I think the time is gone by for considering whether Robertson would be injured in the opinion of any one. If anything he wrote or thought could make others think, that would do good. The opinion of any one in this world, except the wise and good, who do not aspire to be even tolerant—who are too *modest* to be tolerant, since toleration implies superiority—is of little consequence. The only true "Toleration Act" is that of God, who tolerates all. But yet, God does not *tolerate*, He *educates*. The educator expects his pupil to be imperfect. He professes to cure imperfection. So God, as Educator, professes to cure sin ; and, as a means, He sends His Son, the model man, to explain what He means by human perfection ; and He says, "This is what I mean to bring all mankind to." . . .

It appears to me that the intention of Providence is to elevate the people—the million. But this is a work of time, and WE are too impatient. We want all to be done in our lifetime ; but we forget that a thousand years are with Him as a day. Then it appears to me that the despotic form of government is most suited to savage life and early civilisation, and the constitutional form to a more advanced state. But if the despot was enlightened, that would be the simplest form for all states.

Then, again, I think that moral improvement is the real end of man, and that all society is really con-

trived for that ; but this is far more difficult to attain than intellectual improvement.

How this end is to be brought about is hidden from us. But I look upon the first promise, however made or supposed, as prophetic—"Thou shalt bruise his head," *i.e.*, sin shall ultimately be abolished.

When this period arrives, it will be a demonstration that the credit is to be given to God, and not to man. This was the object for which Christ died. This made Paul despise all things in comparison with Christ. . . .

VI.

W. K. to Henry Crabb Robinson.

23 Montpellier Road, Brighton,
October 27th, 1853.

. . . . The proper question is, not why Christianity has done so little? but why have not men attained to common sense? But then that would resolve itself into other questions: why are not all men mathematicians or chemists, &c.? to which the answer is supposed to be very simple. But it is easier for a man to be a great astronomer than a great Christian. It is easier to be a learned man than a good man. Why morals should be so difficult, stirs another and a deeper question; for we must suppose that there is a wisdom in the fact. A question of creeds is but a petty question at any time. The real question lies deeper. . . .

VII.

W. K. to Henry Crabb Robinson.

23 Montpellier Road, Brighton,
November 4th, 1853.

. . . . I have come to a conclusion with respect to the existence of evil which is somewhat different, or appears to be so, from what I have anywhere seen, but which, perhaps, is only stating the same thing differently. It is this: that, with such a being as man, he can only be convinced of sin or folly by suffering its consequences. He is not an *à priori* being (which the Deity is), but a being of experience. We see in every action, from the cradle upwards, that he takes little or nothing upon trust. He must make his experiment, and prove that the fruit is bitter by its taste.

No sooner has one generation done this and satisfied itself, than another arises which must be satisfied in the same way. Thus the effect of the experience of one generation upon the next is an infinitesimal one, but it is something: and so after many ages, even in this life, sin may be conquered: and as to the next, the circumstances will probably be so changed that it is impossible to reason about them at present.

VIII.

W. K. to Henry Crabb Robinson.

23 Montpelier Road, Brighton,
November 8th, 1853.

My dear Sir,

. . . I hear that Maurice is excommunicated.* Now I honour him. I shall criticise him no more. I hear some one at Oxford of the name of Gilbert has pronounced the funeral oration of the Church of England—*i.e.*, I suppose of the intolerant party in it. The last dying speech and confession of Intolerance! Then new Robertsons and new Maurices will arise. *Novus sæclorum nascitur ordo*. These things must be done gradually; we must not pull her down before we have something better to put in her place, "lest a worse fate befall us." I admire that fixedness in England. We have made wonderful progress in fifty years. . . .

IX.

W. K. to Henry Crabb Robinson.

Brighton, December 15th, 1853.

. . . I have read Maurice's letter to Jelf. I admire the spirit of the man much. There is an indescribable sweetness in some of his expressions, especially about the love of God, which go to the heart—except of a theologian.

* John Frederick Denison Maurice (1803-72), the founder and spiritual leader of Christian Socialism in Great Britain, was dismissed in 1853 from his two professorships at King's College, London, because of his "dangerous doctrines" on the subject of eternal punishment.

X.

W. K. to Henry Crabb Robinson.

23 Montpellier Road, Brighton,
February 2nd, 1854.

. . . Lady Byron is now quite recovered. She is always feeble, and obliged to husband her strength, and calculate her powers; but her mind is ever intact, pure, and lofty. It seems to pour forth its streams of benevolence and judgment even from the sick bed; a perennial fountain. Her state of mind has always given me confidence in her severest illnesses. Yet her power of bearing fatigue occasionally, as during the illness and death of her daughter, is as wonderful. . . .

XI.

W. K. to Henry Crabb Robinson.

23 Montpellier Road, Brighton,
March 22nd, 1855.

It would appear unkind in me to pass over the death of our friend Masquerier* without notice. He was a man I had spent many agreeable and instructive hours with—and never more enjoyable than when alone. Then he could speak with less reserve, and was never at a loss for anecdote of many characters whom I knew only historically. He had a large acquaintance with the world. It had not soured his temper—it had only increased his caution and prudence. I think this is the effect produced upon men in public situations. One mistake or one dishonest man may ruin a well-concocted scheme or plan of operations; their caution is therefore a matter of necessity. During the last year I had seen more of him than usual. . . .

I think, as a man approaches the great change, an interest in the nature of that change may well be the uppermost feeling in a *rational* being. Surely the absence of this feeling is a man's own loss peculiarly, whatever may be its connection with the unknown future upon which we are about to enter. How many

* John James Masquérier (1778-1855), the eminent portrait painter, lived in Brighton for several years prior to his death. His portrait of Dr. King is now in the possession of Major G. Lionel King, of Brighton.

are deterred from this subject by the perverted subtleties of theologians, I will not pretend to say. After as wide a survey of human knowledge as my faculties permit, I find no rest but in the character of Christ, of which I still consider I have but an imperfect conception. He forms the under-current in which float all the hopes of the world for rising out of its present chaos. What *we* call chaos is, I doubt not, a step in the wisdom of that Power which we worship as real, though incomprehensible. . . .

XII.

W. K. to Henry Pitman.*

23 Montpellier Road, Brighton,
January 9th, 1864.

My dear Sir,

I am much obliged to you for the *Co-operators* received to-day. I answer it at once, and I will look into them as soon as I have leisure. It is only lately that I have become acquainted with the excellent Mr. Hill.† I sent him the only volume I have of the original *Co-operator*. I believe I have other copies among my papers.

It is very gratifying to me to know that co-operation has been so largely and successfully taken up. I was a solitary pioneer in the beginning, and earned the then ill-favoured, but now enviable, title of a visionary. My visions consisted in the faith that some day the moral principles of Christ would admit of being carried out practically, as they are in a true co-operative society. The honest, everyday virtues recommended throughout the Gospel, are the foundation of family life and co-operation. People must be industrious, honest, and saving. I look forward to

* Henry Pitman (1826-1909), brother of Sir Isaac Pitman (1813-97)—who invented a new system of shorthand—founded and edited the *Co-operator*, a monthly record of co-operative progress, published in Manchester, from 1860 to 1871. He was official reporter of the annual Co-operative Congress for forty years.

† Matthew Davenport Hill (1792-1872), Recorder of Birmingham, is remembered chiefly because of his work in connection with the improvement of criminal law. A staunch friend of co-operation, he contributed many articles to co-operative periodicals, and his advice was often sought by promoters of co-operative societies.

co-operative schools of industrious training, and co-operative colonisation in due time. With proper training, there ought not to be a pauper in England. She has land enough all over the world for ten times her population. The capital wasted in strikes would have made every man a gentleman if properly employed. But enough.

Some years ago, I made an annual visit to Bath, and passed many pleasant hours with your brother. I should be glad to know if the plan of purchasing ground for an institution and printing office succeeded.* I have taken the *Phonetic Journal and Reporter* from the beginning, and I take the *Phonetic Prayer Book* to church; but I have no time to become a practical phonographer. I have got the return of the Industrial and Provident Societies, and it is a noble work.

I am, dear Sir, yours truly,

(Signed) W. KING.

H. Pitman, Esq.

XIII.

W. K. to Henry Pitman.

23 Montpellier Road, Brighton,
February 6th, 1864.

My dear Sir,

I am sorry to have my name so prominently before the public in my lifetime, but I suppose it can hardly be helped, and with me all is quickly passing away. If it acts as any encouragement to others, that is enough. I think Mr. Hill† will find in the last number of my *Co-operator*‡ some reflections on the necessity of further education and knowledge among the working classes, before the first-fruits of the system can be expected.

That little work is likely to contain errors in political economy and other subjects, for it was written when these subjects were practically in their

* The Phonetic Institute at Bath, projected in 1859, was not established until 1874.

† This Mr. Hill, son of Matthew Davenport Hill, was the author of an account of Dr. King published in Pitman's *Co-operator*, March, 1864.

‡ See page 109.

infancy, and when anything like free trade (and I had no one to assist me—I wrote the whole myself) was held as an act of disloyalty. This last month I have come across a letter showing that the first master of our infant school, a brother-in-law of Wilderspin,* an excellent master, was dismissed because he was a local preacher among the Wesleyan Methodists. The reason was, the committee were afraid it would raise a prejudice against the school, among churchmen, and so lose their support.

A few days ago, I received a publication called *The Grocer*, for January 20th, with an article on page 70 against co-operation. It was evidently sent to me as seeing my name in your publication. It is feeble, and attempts to turn the subject into ridicule, and ignores the remarkable success which you mention in this article; and, of course, overlooks the moral effects of the system, which I consider the best part of it. The present division of profits is no doubt a great inducement with many, although it weakens the accumulation of capital. But I see the difficulty of the best mode of employing the capital when obtained. This will be a question for the future.

Yours very truly,
(Signed) W. KING.

XIV.

W. K. to Henry Pitman.

Brighton, May, 1864.

My dear Mr. Pitman,

The editor of *The Grocer* has done me the honour to send me another number of his paper. In case you should not have seen it I send you the leading article, which, no doubt, he thinks very clever and annihilating. If the societies do not answer, they will put themselves down without his help. His style of writing looks more like jealousy than sympathy. It is a pity people cannot confine themselves to legitimate writing. It is like two barristers in court, or two parties in Parliament—whatever is said by the one is contradicted by the other.

You can reply in phonography.

(Signed) W. KING.

* Samuel Wilderspin (1792-1866), educational pioneer, was one of the first to advocate the establishment of infant schools in Great Britain.

XV.

W. K. to Henry Pitman.

Brighton, October, 1864.

My dear Mr. Pitman,

I am much obliged to you for the *Co-operator* and the newspaper received to-day. I have read the article on Law with great pleasure, though the subject is out of the way of the laity. It is at once grand and difficult. We are glad to see improvement going on anywhere and everywhere. I remember Brougham's first speech in the House of Commons on it. I think it took up six hours. At that time all improvement was abhorred, as leading to revolution. I was reading my notes of a sermon at that time, in which it was said that the education of the working classes would lead to rebellion; but as it could not be stopped, the clergy had better put themselves at the head of it, to mitigate the effects. It is gratifying to see hopes of future improvement *in infinitum*. That is my creed. Christ was sent to moralise all nations, and it is only a question of time. I had particular pleasure in the article on criminals. About two years ago I saw a pamphlet before it was published on the subject, written by a Yorkshire magistrate, who went to Ireland on purpose to examine the system. The principles are self-evident, except to narrow, bigoted minds. In feudal times, the governments, such as they were, were the best informed. Now, they are the worst informed; only they are creeping on by letting in new light. In fact, now they would become contemptible if they selected all men upon mere party principles. By-and-by they will go a step farther, pick out the clever boy criminals, and train them in industrial schools. The boy-gangs have always clever leaders, whose loss breaks up the gang. By-and-by, too, you will have co-operative schools. The working classes will see the importance of good training and practical teaching, and unite for the purpose. A new race of mothers will spring up, with a practical knowledge of human nature. Games and the drill will become instruments of exercise, health, and good temper. Gardening, especially, and the elements of the useful and elegant arts, may be taught to young as well as old. Individuals will arise—prophets, like

Hill, for the post office, and Stephenson for railways, and Watt for the steam-engine—who will begin a new era. People will wonder that they should have gone on for thousands of years butchering each other for nothing. Such is the halcyon future; and blessed are they who bring a single brick to the building. I am soon off for the "Delectable Mountains," where Christ will reign over His willing subjects; and where there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, and no more pain; for the former things are passed away.

Yours very truly,

(Signed) W. KING.

XVI.

W. K. to Henry Pitman.

23 Montpellier Road,
Brighton, July 24th, 1865.

My dear Mr. Pitman,

I am obliged to you for sending me the *Co-operator* for June and July, with some additional papers, all of a good character. We may now enjoy the idea that the system has taken firm root. We cannot expect that all societies will be equally prosperous. Where numbers act together, they cannot all be equally well managed, but enough has been done to prove not only the possible but the practicable. They will not REMODEL society according to the original idea of Owen, but they will apply well-known principles of business to the advantage of those who unite in them. They will promote wherever they go a principle of good fellowship and charity, *i.e.*, brotherly love. They will run parallel with the Christian principle, and perhaps in time give that principle a more practical bearing than it has yet received. In the beginning of Christianity the loving spirit of the religion resolved itself into a form of co-operation, but imperfect from the want of business and labour habits. Now that these habits are understood, we want nothing but the spirit of Christianity to give them permanent vitality. I have great faith that this will grow and add to the strength of our beloved country, and enable her to maintain her position of first among the nations.

When England was discovered by the Romans, she was pronounced the largest among the islands, and the richest in corn and pasture. Only lately, one of the greatest of modern historians, Sismondi, pronounced her the happiest in her climate, soil, government, institutions—among which we may now reckon co-operation.

I had a severe illness in the spring, though not dangerous ; but it left me in the dangerous position of entering my 80th year. A short time ago I received a warm letter from Mr. W. Pare, one of the early co-operators from Dublin.

I am, dear Mr. Pitman,

Yours very truly,

(Signed) W. KING.

NOTES.

NOTES.

I.—COMMUNITY (page 3).

(a) "Community . . . signifies properly, a body or collection of people, having *one*, that is, the same interest, and acting as *one*, for the benefit of all." (*Co-operative Magazine*, January, 1827, page 16.)

(b) "Community: an association of persons in sufficient numbers, and living on a space of land of sufficient extent, to supply by their own exertions all of each other's wants." (*Practical Directions for the Speedy and Economical Establishment of Communities*, by William Thompson, 1830, page 2.)

(c) "Let it be universally understood that the grand ultimate object of all co-operative societies, whether engaged in trading, manufacturing, or agricultural pursuits is *community on land*." (A resolution adopted by the Third Co-operative Congress, London, 1832.)

II.—THE SOCIETY AT 36 RED LION SQUARE, LONDON (page 4).

The first London Co-operative Trading Association was "a society first established on the premises of the Co-operative Society, Red Lion Square, and subsequently removed to Jerusalem Passage, Clerkenwell." This was the society which employed William Lovett as its store-keeper. (See *Life and Struggles of William Lovett*. New Edition, 1920, page 41.)

III.—CO-OPERATION AND THE WORKING CLASSES (page 8).

Compare the views of Robert Owen: "The working classes never did *direct* any permanently successful operations. . . . Whenever the working classes has attempted any complicated, important measure that required unity, patience, and perseverance to bring it to a successful issue, they have failed in every instance as soon as they have taken the direction of it." (*New Moral World*, 1837.)

IV.—OVER-POPULATION (page 11.)

Malthus published his *Essay on the Principle of Population* in 1798. A second edition appeared in 1803, a third in 1806, a fourth in 1807, a fifth in 1817, and a sixth in 1826. "In its first form the *Essay on Population* was conclusive as an argument, only it was based on untrue facts; in its second form it was based on true facts, but it was inclusive as an argument." (*Economic Studies*, by Walter Bagehot, 1880, page 137.)

V.—THE KIDDERMINSTER CARPET-WEAVERS (page 13).

"The disagreement . . . at Kidderminster" was the great strike of 1828, when "practically the whole trade of the town was brought to a standstill by the carpet-weavers' six months' resistance to a reduction of 17 per cent in their wages—a resistance in which the operatives received the sympathy and support of many who did not belong to their class." (*History of Trade-unionism*, by Sidney and Beatrice Webb, 1911, page 100.)

VI.—AMOUNT OF CAPITAL REQUIRED (page 13).

(a) "Say, then, 200 individuals (though 300 or 400 would be a much more useful number) to be permanently provided for by a loan for a few years of £20 each, so as to form the nucleus of a community, to be afterwards gradually increased to about 2,000 persons—men, women, and children, about one-third of each. The amount to be raised for the 200 persons would be at least £4,000." (*Practical Directions for the Speedy and Economical Establishment of Communities*, by William Thompson, 1830, page 14.)

(b) "Mr. Thompson explained the reasons why the committee had done so little [to establish a community] . . . Mr. Owen would not consent to have his name associated with any committee who was for making a beginning with a smaller sum than £240,000. . . .

"Mr. Owen said the meeting had mentioned that £6,000 ought to be advanced towards Mr. Thompson's plan. He had the greatest possible esteem for Mr. Thompson, but he begged to assure him that he knew little of the matter; £6,000, £20,000, or even £60,000

would be of little avail. . . ." (*Proceedings of the Third Co-operative Congress, London, 1832.*)

VII.—WORKING-CLASS SOLIDARITY (page 19).

"It is difficult to-day to realise the naive surprise with which the employers of that time regarded the practical development of working-class solidarity. . . . That the London tailors should send money to the Glasgow weavers, or the goldbeaters to the ropespinner, seemed, to the upper and middle classes, little short of a crime." Thus the Webbs, speaking of the period from 1823 to 1828. (*History of Trade-unionism, 1911, page 82.*)

VIII.—QUALIFICATIONS OF MEMBERS (page 23).

"On this subject much difference of opinion prevails amongst the friends of co-operative industry. Some think that all the members should be of the industrious classes, whether of intellectual or muscular occupations, and that lodging room could not be usefully afforded to those who produce nothing. . . . Others think that even amongst the industrious classes selection should be made of those assenting to the practical principles of co-operative industry, of sober, industrious habits, and skilled in some branch of agriculture, trade, or manufacture. . . . The great body of the community should be of the industrious classes. If not, it cannot be a co-operative community. . . ." (*Practical Directions for the Speedy and Economical Establishment of Communities, by William Thompson, 1830, page 47.*)

IX.—MR. WILLIAM CARSON (page 37).

Mr. Carson was well known in the early days of the co-operative movement. He attended the Congresses held in 1831 and 1832, and was the first to propose the formation of "wholesale trading companies." At the fourth Congress it was Mr. Carson who moved: "That the thanks of this Congress be presented to the philanthropic and talented author of the papers published at Brighton, under the title of *The Co-operator*, for the useful instruction which he has conveyed, in the simple, yet truly eloquent, language of the papers alluded to, on the important subjects of which they treat. . . ."

X.—THE BRIGHTON SOCIETY (page 51).

See Dr. King's letter to Henry Brougham, M.P., printed on page 119.

XI.—EMPLOYMENT OF CHILDREN (page 52).

[In community] "children will be employed in the manufactures, as well as agriculture." (*Practical Directions for the Speedy and Economical Establishment of Communities*, by William Thompson, 1830, page 97.)

XII.—THE COMBINATION LAWS (page 59).

The Combination Acts of 1799-1800, which applied to all industries, were repealed in 1824-5.

XIII.—ROUNDSMEN (page 67).

"Gilbert's Act of 1782 provided that in the parishes incorporated under that Act the guardians were not to send able-bodied poor to the poorhouse, but to find work for them or maintain them until work was found; the guardian was to take the wage and provide the labourer with a maintenance. Thus there grew up a variety of systems of public employment; direct employment of paupers on parish work: the labour rate system, or the sharing out of the paupers among the ratepayers; the roundsmen system by which pauper labour was sold to the farmers." (*The Village Labourer*, by J. L. and Barbara Hammond, 1911, page 148.)

XIV.—LABOUR AS A MARKETABLE COMMODITY (page 69).

Compare Dr. King's views with those held by modern guildsmen, *i.e.*, "In speaking of the wage-system, they [National Guildsmen] are speaking of the system under which labour is bought and sold in the labour market as an article of commerce. In demanding the abolition of wavery, they are repudiating utterly the idea that labour is a commodity, or that it ought to be bought and sold for what it will fetch in a labour market.'" (*Self-Government in Industry*, by G. H. D. Cole, 1917, page 153.)

XV.—PRUDENTIAL MARRIAGE (page 69).

“By moral restraint I would be understood to mean a restraint from marriage from prudential motives.” (Malthus, *Essay on the Principle of Population*. Second edition, 1803.)

XVI.—MR. RAPP'S COLONY AT HARMONY (page 72).

The Harmony Society, founded in Pennsylvania in 1804, by George Rapp, was the most successful community established in America in the first quarter of the 19th century. Although the society did not at first discourage marriage, “Father Rapp” taught that “the unmarried is the higher and holier estate.” Both he and his son “set an example which the remainder of the society quickly followed; thenceforth no more marriages were contracted in Harmony, and no more children were born.” In 1825, the Rappites removed to the new town of Economy, selling the town of Harmony and 20,000 acres of land to Robert Owen, who there established “The New Harmony Community.” (See *The Communistic Societies of the United States*, 1875, by Charles Nordhoff, and *History of American Socialisms*, 1870, by John Humphrey Noyes.)

XVII.—THE PRINCIPLE OF COMPETITION (page 78).

Dr. King's remarks on the principle of competition, printed on page 78 of *The Co-operator*, greatly displeased William Lovett, who, at the third quarterly meeting of the British Association for Promoting Co-operative Knowledge, held on January 7th, 1830, said: “Since the last meeting, a powerful writer, and, he believed, a benevolent friend to the co-operative cause, had in a measure apologised for the competitive system, and had endeavoured to remove from it the odium which he affirmed that the co-operators had thrown upon it. The writer to whom he referred (the author of *The Co-operator*, we believe) began by stating that the competitive principle was inseparable from human nature. Unfortunately, it was so under the present arrangement of society, and with the present system of education. . . .” (*The Co-operative Miscellany, or Magazine*, February, 1830, page 29.)

XVIII.—MUTUAL CONFIDENCE ESSENTIAL TO CO-OPERATION (page 84).

Dr. King's argument that in co-operation "one bad character may ruin a society, if not detected . . . the whole society is guaranteed for the character of each," has a striking resemblance to the principle on which the Raiffeism system of agricultural credit is based. Of this system, it is said that "the genius of the German philanthropist who devised the scheme of 'capitalising the honesty' of a poor man, has devised also the means of securing, if not the honesty of the individual, at least the desire of the group that all their associates should be so, by making unlimited liability an essential part of the organisation of his societies." (*Report of the Recess Committee on Establishing a Department of Agriculture and Industries for Ireland, 1896.*)

XIX.—PATRONS OF CO-OPERATION (page 86).

The suggestion made by Dr. King's correspondent that the co-operators should "bethink themselves of bespeaking the goodwill and countenance of some *Patron*," caused the British Association for Promoting Co-operative Knowledge to make public protest against such a proposal. In a statement of March 4th, 1830, published in the *Weekly Free Press*, the association bade co-operators: "Beware of PATRONS of any sort! But particularly a 'clergyman or magistrate'!!! . . . These dangerous propositions must be blotted out from the pages of *The Co-operator* or all future communications in that little pamphlet must be looked on as wolves' clothing. Let the working classes look to themselves and be their own PATRONS, or have none at all! The British Association protests against patronage in any form; also protests against competition in any shape. . . ." In the issue of *The Co-operative Miscellany or Magazine*, for May, 1830, there appeared a long "Remonstrance occasioned by a late Latitudinarian Doctrine promulgated by a certain *Co-operator*." This began: "Hear, O ye Co-operators! Be not entangled again in the yoke of bondage, prudence, and commonsense dictates, surrender not at your peril one jot or tittle of your power; let not your hearts fail you, ere you are half escaped from your worse than Egyptian bondage, &c., &c."

XX.—THE REV. W. L. POPE'S ATTACK ON DR. KING
(page 92).

“ I am extremely sorry that I had not an opportunity of hearing the sermons you thought it right to preach upon the subject of co-operation, because I should better have understood the reasons you had for disapproving of it, and the arguments by which you attempted to prove that the motives of the editor of *The Co-operator* were ‘wicked,’ ‘his principles horrid,’ and himself ‘an infidel.’ . . .

I, who know the editor well, know that these are the last epithets he deserves, and that no motive but a religious one, would have induced him to undertake the difficult task of explaining to his poor, suffering, Christian brethren a method by which they might relieve themselves, by the blessing of God, from a state now bordering on starvation, and prepare the way for an improved moral and religious education of their children. . . .

“ If the subject of religion be not brought forward, it is surely as excusable as for other authors treating on general subjects. . . .

“ A Friend to Co-operation,
Because I am a Christian.”

(*A letter to the Rev. W. L. Pope, Tunbridge Wells, in reply to Two Sermons preached by him on the subject of Co-operation, 1829.*)

XXI.—THE FOUNDER OF INFANT SCHOOLS (page 95).

The first infant schools were founded by Johann Friedrich Oberlin (1740-1826), a Protestant pastor in the Ban-de-la-Roche, who was born at Strassburg. He was a zealous advocate of education, whose collected writings were published in 1843. One of the first infant schools established in Great Britain was opened by Robert Owen at New Lanark in 1816, hence “the infant school system in England sprang from a suspected source.”

XXII.—THE ESSENES (page 106).

The Essenes were a small Jewish sect or order existing in the times of Jesus. Their chief characteristics appear to have been a preference for an agricultural life; community of goods and common

meals; abstinence from marriage; and belief in immortality without resurrection. It has been suggested that certain forms adopted by the early Christian Church were borrowed from this sect. (See Lightfoot's *Colossians and Philemon*, 1875.)

XXIII.—EMANUEL DE FELLEBERG (page 109.)

Emanuel de Fellenberg (1771-1844), the Swiss philanthropist and educational reformer, established in 1807 his "Poor School" or "Agricultural Institution" for destitute children at Hofwyl, near Berne. His aim was to make this institution self-supporting, and "to use agriculture as a means of moral training for the poor." Fellenberg's work attracted great attention and is a landmark in the history of education. Robert Owen visited Fellenberg's establishment in 1817, and was so impressed by what he saw that he afterwards sent his sons Robert Dale Owen and William Owen to school there. Dr. King in 1842 published an account of *The Institutions of De Fellenberg*. (See *Threading My Way: Twenty-seven Years of Autobiography* (1874), by Robert Dale Owen.

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