

RUSKIN JOHN

UNTO THIS LAST, AND
OTHER ESSAYS ON
POLITICAL ECONOMY

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THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF ART

PREFACE

The greater part of the following treatise remains in the exact form in which it was read at Manchester; but the more familiar passages of it, which were trusted to extempore delivery, have been since written with greater explicitness and fullness than I could give them in speaking; and a considerable number of notes are added, to explain the points which could not be sufficiently considered in the time I had at my disposal in the lecture-room.

Some apology may be thought due to the reader, for an endeavour to engage his attention on a subject of which no profound study seems compatible with the work in which I am usually employed. But profound study is not, in this case, necessary either to writer or reader, while accurate study, up to

a certain point, is necessary for us all. Political economy means, in plain English, nothing more than "citizens' economy"; and its first principles ought, therefore, to be understood by all who mean to take the responsibility of citizens, as those of household economy by all who take the responsibility of householders. Nor are its first principles in the least obscure: they are, many of them, disagreeable in their practical requirements, and people in general pretend that they cannot understand, because they are unwilling to obey them; or, rather, by habitual disobedience, destroy their capacity of understanding them. But there is not one of the really great principles of the science which is either obscure or disputable—which might not be taught to a youth as soon as he can be trusted with an annual allowance, or to a young lady as soon as she is of age to be taken into counsel by the housekeeper.

I might, with more appearance of justice, be blamed for thinking it necessary to enforce what everybody is supposed to know. But this fault will hardly be found with me, while the commercial events recorded daily in our journals, and still more the explanations attempted to be given of them, show that a large number of our so-called merchants are as ignorant of the nature of money as they are reckless, unjust, and unfortunate in its employment.

The statements of economical principle given in the text, though I know that most, if not all, of them are accepted by existing authorities on the science, are not supported by

references, because I have never read any author on political economy, except Adam Smith, twenty years ago.¹ Whenever I have taken up any modern book upon this subject, I have usually found it encumbered with inquiries into accidental or minor commercial results, for the pursuit of which an ordinary reader could have no leisure, and, by the complication of which, it seemed to me, the authors themselves had been not unfrequently prevented from seeing to the root of the business.

Finally, if the reader should feel inclined to blame me for too sanguine a statement of future possibilities in political practice, let him consider how absurd it would have appeared in the days of Edward I. if the present state of social economy had been then predicted as necessary, or even described as possible. And I believe the advance from the days of Edward I. to our own, great as it is confessedly, consists, not so much in what we have actually accomplished, as in what we are now enabled to conceive.

¹ 1857.

LECTURE I

Among the various characteristics of the age in which we live, as compared with other ages of this not yet *very* experienced world, one of the most notable appears to me to be the just and wholesome contempt in which we hold poverty. I repeat, the *just* and *wholesome* contempt; though I see that some of my hearers look surprised at the expression. I assure them, I use it in sincerity; and I should not have ventured to ask you to listen to me this evening, unless I had entertained a profound respect for wealth—true wealth, that is to say; for, of course, we ought to respect neither wealth nor anything else that is false of its kind: and the distinction between real and false wealth is one of the points on which I shall have a few words presently to say to you. But true wealth I hold, as I said, in great honour; and sympathize, for the most part, with that extraordinary feeling of the present age which publicly pays this honour to riches. I cannot, however, help noticing how extraordinary it is, and how this epoch of ours differs from all bygone epochs in having no philosophical nor religious worshippers of the ragged godship of poverty. In the classical ages, not only there were people who voluntarily lived in tubs, and who used gravely to maintain the superiority of tub-life to town-life, but the Greeks and Latins seem to have looked on these eccentric, and I do not scruple to say, absurd people, with as much respect as we do upon large capitalists and

landed proprietors; so that really, in those days, no one could be described as purse proud, but only as empty-purse proud. And no less distinct than the honour which those curious Greek people pay to their conceited poor, is the disrespectful manner in which they speak of the rich; so that one cannot listen long either to them, or to the Roman writers who imitated them, without finding oneself entangled in all sorts of plausible absurdities; hard upon being convinced of the uselessness of collecting that heavy yellow substance which we call gold, and led generally to doubt all the most established maxims of political economy. Nor are matters much better in the middle ages. For the Greeks and Romans contented themselves with mocking at rich people, and constructing merry dialogues between Charon and Diogenes or Menippus, in which the ferryman and the cynic rejoiced together as they saw kings and rich men coming down to the shore of Acheron, in lamenting and lamentable crowds, casting their crowns into the dark waters, and searching, sometimes in vain, for the last coin out of all their treasures that could ever be of use to them. But these Pagan views of the matter were indulgent, compared with those which were held in the middle ages, when wealth seems to have been looked upon by the best men not only as contemptible, but as criminal. The purse round the neck is, then, one of the principal signs of condemnation in the pictured Inferno; and the Spirit of Poverty is revered with subjection of heart, and faithfulness of affection, like that of a loyal knight for his lady, or a loyal subject for his queen. And

truly, it requires some boldness to quit ourselves of these feelings, and to confess their partiality or their error, which, nevertheless, we are certainly bound to do. For wealth is simply one of the greatest powers which can be entrusted to human hands: a power, not indeed to be envied, because it seldom makes us happy; but still less to be abdicated or despised; while, in these days, and in this country, it has become a power all the more notable, in that the possessions of a rich man are not represented, as they used to be, by wedges of gold or coffers of jewels, but by masses of men variously employed, over whose bodies and minds the wealth, according to its direction, exercises harmful or helpful influence, and becomes, in that alternative, Mammon either of Unrighteousness or of Righteousness.

Now, it seemed to me that since, in the name you have given to this great gathering of British pictures, you recognise them as Treasures—that is, I suppose, as part and parcel of the real wealth of the country—you might not be uninterested in tracing certain commercial questions connected with this particular form of wealth. Most persons express themselves as surprised at its quantity; not having known before to what an extent good art had been accumulated in England: and it will, therefore, I should think, be held a worthy subject of consideration, what are the political interests involved in such accumulations; what kind of labour they represent, and how this labour may in general be applied and economized, so as to produce the richest results.

Now, you must have patience with me, if in approaching the

specialty of this subject, I dwell a little on certain points of general political science already known or established: for though thus, as I believe, established, some which I shall have occasion to rest arguments on are not yet by any means universally accepted; and therefore, though I will not lose time in any detailed defence of them, it is necessary that I should distinctly tell you in what form I receive, and wish to argue from them; and this the more, because there may perhaps be a part of my audience who have not interested themselves in political economy, as it bears on ordinary fields of labour, but may yet wish to hear in what way its principles can be applied to Art. I shall, therefore, take leave to trespass on your patience with a few elementary statements in the outset, and with, the expression of some general principles, here and there, in the course of our particular inquiry.

To begin, then, with one of these necessary truisms: all economy, whether of states, households, or individuals, may be defined to be the art of managing labour. The world is so regulated by the laws of Providence, that a man's labour, well applied, is always amply sufficient to provide him during his life with all things needful to him, and not only with those, but with many pleasant objects of luxury; and yet farther, to procure him large intervals of healthful rest and serviceable leisure. And a nation's labour, well applied, is in like manner, amply sufficient to provide its whole population with good food and comfortable habitation; and not with those only, but with good education besides, and objects of luxury, art treasures, such as these you

have around you now. But by those same laws of Nature and Providence, if the labour of the nation or of the individual be misapplied, and much more if it be insufficient,—if the nation or man be indolent and unwise,—suffering and want result, exactly in proportion to the indolence and improvidence,—to the refusal of labour, or to the misapplication of it. Wherever you see want, or misery, or degradation, in this world about you, there, be sure, either industry has been wanting, or industry has been in error. It is not accident, it is not Heaven-commanded calamity, it is not the original and inevitable evil of man's nature, which fill your streets with lamentation, and your graves with prey. It is only that, when there should have been providence, there has been waste; when there should have been labour, there has been lasciviousness; and, wilfulness, when there should have been subordination.²

Now, we have warped the word "economy" in our English: language into a meaning which it has no business whatever to bear. In our use of it, it constantly signifies merely sparing or saving; economy of money means saving money—economy of time, sparing time, and so on. But that is a wholly barbarous use of the word—barbarous in a double sense, for it is not English, and it is bad Greek; barbarous in a treble sense, for it is not English, it is bad Greek, and it is worse sense. Economy no more means saving money than it means spending money. It means, the

² Proverbs xiii. 23: "Much food is in the tillage of the poor: but there is that is destroyed for want of judgment."

administration of a house; its stewardship; spending or saving, that is, whether money or time, or anything else, to the best possible advantage. In the simplest and clearest definition of it, economy, whether public or private, means the wise management of labour; and it means this mainly in three senses: namely, first, *applying* your labour rationally; secondly, *preserving* its produce carefully; lastly, *distributing* its produce seasonably.

I say first, applying your labour rationally; that is, so as to obtain the most precious things you can, and the most lasting things, by it: not growing oats in land where you can grow wheat, nor putting fine embroidery on a stuff that will not wear. Secondly, preserving its produce carefully; that is to say, laying up your wheat wisely in storehouses for the time of famine, and keeping your embroidery watchfully from the moth: and lastly, distributing its produce seasonably; that is to say, being able to carry your corn at once to the place where the people are hungry, and your embroideries to the places where they are gay, so fulfilling in all ways the Wise Man's description, whether of the queenly housewife or queenly nation. "She riseth while it is yet night, and giveth meat to her household, and a portion to her maidens. She maketh herself coverings of tapestry, her clothing is silk and purple. Strength and honour are in her clothing, and she shall rejoice in time to come."

Now, you will observe that in this description of the perfect economist, or mistress of a household, there is a studied expression of the balanced division of her care between the two

great objects of utility and splendour; in her right hand, food and flax, for life and clothing; in her left hand, the purple and the needlework, for honour and for beauty. All perfect housewifery or national economy is known by these two divisions; wherever either is wanting, the economy is imperfect. If the motive of pomp prevails, and the care of the national economist is directed only to the accumulation of gold, and of pictures, and of silk and marble, you know at once that the time must soon come when all these treasures shall be scattered and blasted in national ruin. If, on the contrary, the element of utility prevails, and the nation disdains to occupy itself in any wise with the arts of beauty or delight, not only a certain quantity of its energy calculated for exercise in those arts alone must be entirely wasted, which is bad economy, but also the passions connected with the utilities of property become morbidly strong, and a mean lust of accumulation merely for the sake of accumulation, or even of labour merely for the sake of labour, will banish at last the serenity and the morality of life, as completely, and perhaps more ignobly, than even the lavishness of pride and the lightness of pleasure. And similarly, and much more visibly, in private and household economy, you may judge always of its perfectness by its fair balance between the use and the pleasure of its possessions. You will see the wise cottager's garden trimly divided between its well-set vegetables, and its fragrant flowers; you will see the good housewife taking pride in her pretty table-cloth, and her glittering shelves, no less than in her well-dressed

dish, and her full storeroom; the care in her countenance will alternate with gaiety, and though you will reverence her in her seriousness, you will know her best by her smile.

Now, as you will have anticipated, I am going to address you, on this and our succeeding evening, chiefly on the subject of that economy which relates rather to the garden than the farm-yard. I shall ask you to consider with me the kind of laws by which we shall best distribute the beds of our national garden, and raise in it the sweetest succession of trees pleasant to the sight, and (in no forbidden sense) to be desired to make us wise. But, before proceeding to open this specialty of our subject, let me pause for a few moments to plead with you for the acceptance of that principle of government or authority which must be at the root of all economy, whether for use or for pleasure. I said, a few minutes ago, that a nation's labour, well applied, was amply sufficient to provide its whole population with good food, comfortable clothing, and pleasant luxury. But the good, instant, and constant application is everything. We must not, when our strong hands are thrown out of work, look wildly about for want of something to do with them. If ever we feel that want, it is a sign that all our household is out of order. Fancy a farmer's wife, to whom one or two of her servants should come at twelve o'clock at noon, crying that they had got nothing to do; that they did not know what to do next: and fancy still farther, the said farmer's wife looking hopelessly about her rooms and yard, they being all the while considerably in disorder, not knowing where

to set the spare hand-maidens to work, and at last complaining bitterly that she had been obliged to give them their dinner for nothing. That's the type of the kind of political economy we practise too often in England. Would you not at once assert of such a mistress that she knew nothing of her duties? and would you not be certain, if the household were rightly managed, the mistress would be only too glad at any moment to have the help of any number of spare hands; that she would know in an instant what to set them to;—in an instant what part of to-morrow's work might be most serviceably forwarded, what part of next month's work most wisely provided for, or what new task of some profitable kind undertaken? and when the evening came, and she dismissed her servants to their recreation or their rest, or gathered them to the reading round the work-table, under the eaves in the sunset, would you not be sure to find that none of them had been overtaken by her, just because none had been left idle; that everything had been accomplished because all had been employed; that the kindness of the mistress had aided her presence of mind, and the slight labour had been entrusted to the weak, and the formidable to the strong; and that as none had been dishonoured by inactivity so none had been broken by toil?

Now, the precise counterpart of such a household would be seen in a nation in which political economy was rightly understood. You complain of the difficulty of finding work for your men. Depend upon it, the real difficulty rather is to find men for your work. The serious question for you is not how many you

have to feed, but how much you have to do; it is our inactivity, not our hunger, that ruins us: let us never fear that our servants should have a good appetite—our wealth is in their strength, not in their starvation. Look around this island of yours, and see what you have to do in it. The sea roars against your harbourless cliffs—you have to build the breakwater, and dig the port of refuge; the unclean pestilence ravins in your streets—you have to bring the full stream from the hills, and to send the free winds through the thoroughfare; the famine blanches your lips and eats away your flesh—you have to dig the moor and dry the marsh, to bid the morass give forth instead of engulfing, and to wring the honey and oil out of the rock. These things, and thousands such, we have to do, and shall have to do constantly, on this great farm of ours; for do not suppose that it is anything else than that. Precisely the same laws of economy which apply to the cultivation of a farm or an estate apply to the cultivation of a province or of an island. Whatever rebuke you would address to the improvident master of an ill-managed patrimony, precisely that rebuke we should address to ourselves, so far as we leave our population in idleness and our country in disorder. What would you say to the lord of an estate who complained to you of his poverty and disabilities, and, when you pointed out to him that his land was half of it overrun with weeds, and that his fences were all in ruin, and that his cattle-sheds were roofless, and his labourers lying under the hedges faint for want of food, he answered to you that it would ruin him to weed his land or to roof his sheds—that

those were too costly operations for him to undertake, and that he knew not how to feed his labourers nor pay them? Would you not instantly answer, that instead of ruining him to weed his fields, it would save him; that his inactivity was his destruction, and that to set his labourers to work was to feed them? Now, you may add acre to acre, and estate to estate, as far as you like, but you will never reach a compass of ground which shall escape from the authority of these simple laws. The principles which are right in the administration of a few fields, are right also in the administration of a great country from horizon to horizon: idleness does not cease to be ruinous because it is extensive, nor labour to be productive because it is universal.

Nay, but you reply, there is one vast difference between the nation's economy and the private man's: the farmer has full authority over his labourers; he can direct them to do what is needed to be done, whether they like it or not; and he can turn them away if they refuse to work, or impede others in their working, or are disobedient, or quarrelsome. There *is* this great difference; it is precisely this difference on which I wish to fix your attention, for it is precisely this difference which you have to do away with. We know the necessity of authority in farm, or in fleet, or in army; but we commonly refuse to admit it in the body of the nation. Let us consider this point a little.

In the various awkward and unfortunate efforts which the French have made at the development of a social system, they have at least stated one true principle, that of fraternity or

brotherhood. Do not be alarmed; they got all wrong in their experiments, because they quite forgot that this fact of fraternity implied another fact quite as important—that of paternity or fatherhood. That is to say, if they were to regard the nation as one family, the condition of unity in that family consisted no less in their having a head, or a father, than in their being faithful and affectionate members, or brothers. But we must not forget this, for we have long confessed it with our lips, though we refuse to confess it in our lives. For half an hour every Sunday we expect a man in a black gown, supposed to be telling us truth, to address us as brethren, though we should be shocked at the notion of any brotherhood existing among us out of church. And we can hardly read a few sentences on any political subject without running a chance of crossing the phrase "paternal government," though we should be utterly horror-struck at the idea of governments claiming anything like a father's authority over us. Now, I believe those two formal phrases are in both instances perfectly binding and accurate, and that the image of the farm and its servants which I have hitherto used, as expressing a wholesome national organization, fails only of doing so, not because it is too domestic, but because it is not domestic enough; because the real type of a well-organized nation must be presented, not by a farm cultivated by servants who wrought for hire, and might be turned away if they refused to labour, but by a farm in which the master was a father, and in which all the servants were sons; which implied, therefore, in all its regulations, not merely the order of

expediency, but the bonds of affection and responsibilities of relationship; and in which all acts and services were not only to be sweetened by brotherly concord, but to be enforced by fatherly authority.³

Observe, I do not mean in the least that we ought to place such an authority in the hands of any one person, or of any class or body of persons. But I do mean to say that as an individual who conducts himself wisely must make laws for himself which at some time or other may appear irksome or injurious, but which, precisely at the time they appear most irksome, it is most necessary he should obey, so a nation which means to conduct itself wisely, must establish authority over itself, vested either in kings, councils, or laws, which it must resolve to obey, even at times when the law or authority appears irksome to the body of the people, or injurious to certain masses of it. And this kind of national law has hitherto been only judicial; contented, that is, with an endeavour to prevent and punish violence and crime: but, as we advance in our social knowledge; we shall endeavour to make our government paternal as well as judicial; that is, to establish such laws and authorities as may at once direct us in our occupations, protect us against our follies, and visit us in our distresses: a government which shall repress dishonesty, as now it punishes theft; which shall show how the discipline of the masses may be brought to aid the toils of peace, as discipline of the masses has hitherto knit the sinews of battle; a government which

³ See [note 1st, in Addenda \[p. 86\]](#).

shall have its soldiers of the ploughshare as well as its soldiers of the sword, and which shall distribute more proudly its golden crosses of industry—golden as the glow of the harvest, than now it grants its bronze crosses of honour—bronzed with the crimson of blood.

I have not, of course, time to insist on the nature or details of government of this kind; only I wish to plead for your several and future consideration of this one truth, that the notion of Discipline and Interference lies at the very root of all human progress or power; that the "Let alone" principle is, in all things which man has to do with, the principle of death; that it is ruin to him, certain and total, if he lets his land alone—if he lets his fellow-men alone—if he lets his own soul alone. That his whole life, on the contrary, must, if it is healthy life, be continually one of ploughing and pruning, rebuking and helping, governing and punishing; and that therefore it is only in the concession of some great principle of restraint and interference in national action that he can ever hope to find the secret of protection against national degradation. I believe that the masses have a right to claim education from their government; but only so far as they acknowledge the duty of yielding obedience to their government. I believe they have a right to claim employment from their governours; but only so far as they yield to the governour the direction and discipline of their labour; and it is only so far as they grant to the men whom they may set over them the father's authority to check the childishnesses of national fancy, and direct

the waywardnesses of national energy, that they have a right to ask that none of their distresses should be unrelieved, none of their weaknesses unwatched; and that no grief, nor nakedness, nor peril should exist for them, against which the father's hand was not outstretched, or the father's shield uplifted.⁴

Now, I have pressed this upon you at more length than is needful or proportioned to our present purposes of inquiry, because I would not for the first time speak to you on this subject of political economy without clearly stating what I believe to be its first grand principle. But its bearing on the matter in hand is chiefly to prevent you from at once too violently dissenting from me when what I may state to you as advisable economy in art appears to imply too much restraint or interference with the freedom of the patron or artist. We are a little apt, though, on the whole a prudent nation, to act too immediately on our impulses, even in matters merely commercial; much more in those involving continual appeals to our fancies. How far,

⁴ Compare Wordsworth's Essay on the Poor-Law Amendment Bill. I quote one important passage:—"But, if it be not safe to touch the abstract question of man's right in a social state to help himself even in the last extremity, may we not still contend for the duty of a Christian government, standing *in loco parentis* towards all its subjects, to make such effectual provision that no one shall be in danger of perishing either through the neglect or harshness of its legislation? Or, waiving this, is it not indisputable that the claim of the State to the allegiance, involves the protection of the subject? And, as all rights in one party impose a correlative duty upon another, it follows that the right of the State to require the services of its members, even to the jeoparding of their lives in the common defence, establishes a right in the people (not to be gainsaid by utilitarians and economists) to public support when, from any cause, they may be unable to support themselves."—(See [note 2nd in Addenda \[p. 90\]](#)).

therefore, the proposed systems or restraints may be advisable, it is for you to judge; only I pray you not to be offended with them merely because they *are* systems and restraints. Do you at all recollect that interesting passage of Carlyle, in which he compares, in this country and at this day, the understood and commercial value of man and horse; and in which he wonders that the horse, with its inferior brains and its awkward hoofiness, instead of handiness, should be always worth so many tens or scores of pounds in the market, while the man, so far from always commanding his price in the market, would often be thought to confer a service on the community by simply killing himself out of their way? Well, Carlyle does not answer his own question, because he supposes we shall at once see the answer. The value of the horse consists simply in the fact of your being able to put a bridle on him. The value of the man consists precisely in the same thing. If you can bridle him, or which is better, if he can bridle himself, he will be a valuable creature directly. Otherwise, in a commercial point of view, his value is either nothing, or accidental only. Only, of course, the proper bridle of man is not a leathern one: what kind of texture it is rightly made of, we find from that command, "Be ye not as the horse or as the mule which have no understanding, whose mouths must be held in with bit and bridle." You are not to be without the reins, indeed, but they are to be of another kind; "I will guide thee with mine Eye." So the bridle of man is to be the Eye of God; and if he rejects that guidance, then the next best for him is the horse's and the mule's,

which have no understanding; and if he rejects that, and takes the bit fairly in his teeth, then there is nothing left for him than the blood that comes out of the city, up to the horsebridles.

Quitting, however, at last these general and serious laws of government—or rather bringing them down to our own business in hand—we have to consider three points of discipline in that particular branch of human labour which is concerned, not with procuring of food, but the expression of emotion; we have to consider respecting art: first, how to apply our labour to it; then, how to accumulate or preserve the results of labour; and then, how to distribute them. But since in art the labour which we have to employ is the labour of a particular class of men—men who have special genius for the business, we have not only to consider how to apply the labour, but first of all, how to produce the labourer; and thus the question in this particular case becomes fourfold: first, how to get your man of genius; then, how to employ your man of genius; then, how to accumulate and preserve his work in the greatest quantity; and lastly, how to distribute his work to the best national advantage. Let us take up these questions in succession.

I. Discovery.—How are we to get our men of genius: that is to say, by what means may we produce among us, at any given time, the greatest quantity of effective art-intellect? A wide question, you say, involving an account of all the best means of art education. Yes, but I do not mean to go into the consideration of those; I want only to state the few principles which lie at the

foundation of the matter. Of these, the first is that you have always to find your artist, not to make him; you can't manufacture him, any more than you can manufacture gold. You can find him, and refine him: you dig him out as he lies nugget-fashion in the mountain-stream; you bring him home; and you make him into current coin, or household plate, but not one grain of him can you originally produce. A certain quantity of art-intellect is born annually in every nation, greater or less according to the nature and cultivation of the nation or race of men; but a perfectly fixed quantity annually, not increaseable by one grain. You may lose it, or you may gather it; you may let it lie loose in the ravine, and buried in the sands, or you may make kings' thrones of it, and overlay temple gates with it, as you choose: but the best you can do with it is always merely sifting, melting, hammering, purifying—never creating. And there is another thing notable about this artistical gold; not only is it limited in quantity, but in use. You need not make thrones or golden gates with it unless you like, but assuredly you can't do anything else with it. You can't make knives of it, nor armour, nor railroads. The gold won't cut you, and it won't carry you; put it to a mechanical use, and you destroy it at once. It is quite true that in the greatest artists, their proper artistical faculty is united with every other; and you may make use of the other faculties, and let the artistical one lie dormant. For aught I know, there may be two or three Leonardo da Vincis employed at this moment in your harbours and railroads: but you are not employing their Leonardesque or

golden faculty there, you are only oppressing and destroying it. And the artistical gift in average men is not joined with others; your born painter, if you don't make a painter of him, won't be a first-rate merchant, or lawyer; at all events, whatever he turns out, his own special gift is unemployed by you; and in no wise helps him in that other business. So here you have a certain quantity of a particular sort of intelligence, produced for you annually by providential laws, which you can only make use of by setting it to its own proper work, and which any attempt to use otherwise involves the dead loss of so much human energy. Well, then, supposing we wish to employ it, how is it to be best discovered and refined? It is easily enough discovered. To wish to employ it is to discover it. All that you need is, a school of trial⁵ in every important town, in which those idle farmers' lads whom their masters never can keep out of mischief, and those stupid tailors' 'prentices who are always stitching the sleeves in wrong way upwards, may have a try at this other trade; only this school of trial must not be entirely regulated by formal laws of art education, but must ultimately be the workshop of a good master painter, who will try the lads with one kind of art and another, till he finds out what they are fit for. Next, after your trial school, you want your easy and secure employment, which is the matter of chief importance. For, even on the present system, the boys who have really intense art capacity, generally make painters of themselves; but then, the best half of their early energy is lost

⁵ See [note 3rd. in Addenda \[p. 95\]](#).

in the battle of life. Before a good painter can get employment, his mind has always been embittered, and his genius distorted. A common mind usually stoops, in plastic chill, to whatever is asked of it, and scrapes or daubs its way complacently into public favour.⁶ But your great men quarrel with you, and you revenge yourselves by starving them for the first half of their lives. Precisely in the degree in which any painter possesses original genius, is at present the increase of moral certainty that during his early years he will have a hard battle to fight; and that just at the time when his conceptions ought to be full and happy, his temper gentle, and his hopes enthusiastic—just at that most critical period, his heart is full of anxieties and household cares; he is chilled by disappointments, and vexed by injustice; he becomes obstinate in his errors, no less than in his virtues, and the arrows of his aims are blunted, as the reeds of his trust are broken.

What we mainly want, therefore, is a means of sufficient and unagitated employment: not holding out great prizes for which young painters are to scramble; but furnishing all with adequate support, and opportunity to display such power as they possess without rejection or mortification. I need not say that the best field of labour of this kind would be presented by the constant progress of public works involving various decoration; and we will presently examine what kind of public works may thus, advantageously for the nation, be in constant progress. But a more

⁶ See [note 4th, in Addenda \[p. 101\]](#).

important matter even than this of steady employment, is the kind of criticism with which you, the public, receive the works of the young men submitted to you. You may do much harm by indiscreet praise and by indiscreet blame; but remember, the chief harm is always done by blame. It stands to reason that a young man's work cannot be perfect. It *must* be more or less ignorant; it must be more or less feeble; it is likely that it may be more or less experimental, and if experimental, here and there mistaken. If, therefore, you allow yourself to launch out into sudden barking at the first faults you see, the probability is that you are abusing the youth for some defect naturally and inevitably belonging to that stage of his progress; and that you might just as rationally find fault with a child for not being as prudent as a privy councillor, or with a kitten for not being as grave as a cat. But there is one fault which you may be quite sure is unnecessary, and therefore a real and blameable fault: that is haste, involving negligence. Whenever you see that a young man's work is either bold or slovenly, then you may attack it firmly; sure of being right. If his work is bold, it is insolent; repress his insolence: if it is slovenly, it is indolent; spur his indolence. So long as he works in that dashing or impetuous way, the best hope for him is in your contempt: and it is only by the fact of his seeming not to seek your approbation that you may conjecture he deserves it.

But if he does deserve it, be sure that you give it him, else you not only run a chance of driving him from the right road by want of encouragement, but you deprive yourselves of the happiest

privilege you will ever have of rewarding his labour. For it is only the young who can receive much reward from men's praise: the old, when they are great, get too far beyond and above you to care what you think of them. You may urge them then with sympathy, and surround them then with acclamation; but they will doubt your pleasure, and despise your praise. You might have cheered them in their race through the asphodel meadows of their youth; you might have brought the proud, bright scarlet into their faces, if you had but cried once to them "Well done," as they dashed up to the first goal of their early ambition. But now, their pleasure is in memory, and their ambition is in heaven. They can be kind to you, but you never more can be kind to them. You may be fed with the fruit and fullness of their old age, but you were as the nipping blight to them in their blossoming, and your praise is only as the warm winds of autumn to the dying branches.

There is one thought still, the saddest of all, bearing on this withholding of early help. It is possible, in some noble natures, that the warmth and the affections of childhood may remain unchilled, though unanswered; and that the old man's heart may still be capable of gladness, when the long-withheld sympathy is given at last. But in these noble natures it nearly always happens, that the chief motive of earthly ambition has not been to give delight to themselves, but to their parents. Every noble youth looks back, as to the chiefest joy which this world's honour ever gave him, to the moment when first he saw his father's eyes flash with pride, and his mother turn away her head lest he should take

her tears for tears of sorrow. Even the lover's joy, when some worthiness of his is acknowledged before his mistress, is not so great as that, for it is not so pure—the desire to exalt himself in her eyes mixes with that of giving her delight; but he does not need to exalt himself in his parents' eyes: it is with the pure hope of giving them pleasure that he comes to tell them what he has done, or what has been said of him; and therefore he has a purer pleasure of his own. And this purest and best of rewards you keep from him if you can: you feed him in his tender youth with ashes and dishonour; and then you come to him, obsequious, but too late, with your sharp laurel crown, the dew all dried from off its leaves; and you thrust it into his languid hand, and he looks at you wistfully. What shall he do with it? What can he do, but go and lay it on his mother's grave?

Thus, then, you see that you have to provide for your young men: first, the searching or discovering school; then the calm employment; then the justice of praise: one thing more you have to do for them in preparing them for full service—namely, to make, in the noble sense of the word, gentlemen of them; that is to say, to take care that their minds receive such training, that in all they paint they shall see and feel the noblest things. I am sorry to say, that of all parts of an artist's education this is the most neglected among us; and that even where the natural taste and feeling of the youth have been pure and true, where there was the right stuff in him to make a gentleman of, you may too frequently discern some jarring rents in his mind, and elements

of degradation in his treatment of subject, owing to want of gentle training, and of the liberal influence of literature. This is quite visible in our greatest artists, even in men like Turner and Gainsborough; while in the common grade of our second-rate painters the evil attains a pitch which is far too sadly manifest to need my dwelling upon it. Now, no branch of art economy is more important than that of making the intellect at your disposal pure as well as powerful; so that it may always gather for you the sweetest and fairest things. The same quantity of labour from the same man's hand, will, according as you have trained him, produce a lovely and useful work, or a base and hurtful one, and depend upon it, whatever value it may possess, by reason of the painter's skill, its chief and final value, to any nation, depends upon its being able to exalt and refine, as well as to please; and that the picture which most truly deserves the name of an art-treasure, is that which has been painted by a good man.

You cannot but see how far this would lead, if I were to enlarge upon it. I must take it up as a separate subject some other time: only noticing at present that no money could be better spent by a nation than in providing a liberal and disciplined education for its painters, as they advance into the critical period of their youth; and that also, a large part of their power during life depends upon the kind of subjects which you, the public, ask them for, and therefore the kind of thoughts with which you require them to be habitually familiar. I shall have more to say on this head when we come to consider what employment they should have in public

buildings.

There are many other points of nearly as much importance as these, to be explained with reference to the development of genius; but I should have to ask you to come and hear six lectures instead of two if I were to go into their detail. For instance, I have not spoken of the way in which you ought to look for those artificers in various manual trades, who, without possessing the order of genius which you would desire to devote to higher purposes, yet possess wit, and humour, and sense of colour, and fancy for form—all commercially valuable as quantities of intellect, and all more or less expressible in the lower arts of ironwork, pottery, decorative sculpture, and such like. But these details, interesting as they are, I must commend to your own consideration, or leave for some future inquiry. I want just now only to set the bearings of the entire subject broadly before you, with enough of detailed illustration to make it intelligible; and therefore I must quit the first head of it here, and pass to the second, namely, how best to employ the genius we discover. A certain quantity of able hands and heads being placed at our disposal, what shall we most advisably set them upon?

II. Application.—There are three main points the economist has to attend to in this.

First, To set his men to various work.

Secondly, To easy work.

Thirdly, To lasting work.

I shall briefly touch on the first two, for I want to arrest your

attention on the last.

I say first, to various work. Supposing you have two men of equal power as landscape painters—and both of them have an hour at your disposal. You would not set them both to paint the same piece of landscape. You would, of course, rather have two subjects than a repetition of one.

Well, supposing them sculptors, will not the same rule hold? You naturally conclude at once that it will; but you will have hard work to convince your modern architects of that. They will put twenty men to work, to carve twenty capitals; and all shall be the same. If I could show you the architects' yards in England just now, all open at once, perhaps you might see a thousand clever men, all employed in carving the same design. Of the degradation and deathfulness to the art-intellect of the country involved in such a habit, I have more or less been led to speak before now; but I have not hitherto marked its definite tendency to increase the price of *work*, as such. When men are employed continually in carving the same ornaments, they get into a monotonous and methodical habit of labour—precisely correspondent to that in which they would break stones, or paint house-walls. Of course, what they do so constantly, they do easily; and if you excite them temporarily by an increase of wages, you may get much work done by them in a little time. But, unless so stimulated, men condemned to a monotonous exertion, work—and always, by the laws of human nature, *must* work—only at a tranquil rate, not producing by any means a maximum result in a given time. But if

you allow them to vary their designs, and thus interest their heads and hearts in what they are doing, you will find them become eager, first, to get their ideas expressed, and then to finish the expression of them; and the moral energy thus brought to bear on the matter quickens, and therefore cheapens, the production in a most important degree. Sir Thomas Deane, the architect of the new Museum at Oxford, told me, as I passed through Oxford on my way here, that he found that, owing to this cause alone, capitals of various design could be executed cheaper than capitals of similar design (the amount of hand labour in each being the same) by about 30 per cent.

Well, that is the first way, then, in which you will employ your intellect well; and the simple observance of this plain rule of political economy will effect a noble revolution in your architecture, such as you cannot at present so much as conceive. Then the second way in which we are to guard against waste is by setting our men to the easiest, and therefore the quickest, work which will answer the purpose. Marble, for instance, lasts quite as long as granite, and is much softer to work; therefore, when you get hold of a good sculptor, give him marble to carve—not granite. That, you say, is obvious enough. Yes; but it is not so obvious how much of your workmen's time you waste annually in making them cut glass, after it has got hard, when you ought to make them mould it while it is soft. It is not so obvious how much expense you waste in cutting diamonds and rubies, which are the hardest things you can find, into shapes that mean nothing,

when the same men might be cutting sandstone and freestone into shapes that meant something. It is not so obvious how much of the artists' time in Italy you waste, by forcing them to make wretched little pictures for you out of crumbs of stone glued together at enormous cost, when the tenth of the time would make good and noble pictures for you out of water-colour. I could go on giving you almost numberless instances of this great commercial mistake; but I should only weary and confuse you. I therefore commend also this head of our subject to your own meditation, and proceed to the last I named—the last I shall task your patience with to-night. You know we are now considering how to apply our genius; and we were to do it as economists, in three ways:—

To *various* work;

To *easy* work;

To *lasting* work.

This lasting of the work, then, is our final question.

Many of you may, perhaps, remember that Michael Angelo was once commanded by Pietro di Medici to mould a statue out of snow, and that he obeyed the command.⁷ I am glad, and we have all reason to be glad, that such a fancy ever came into the mind of the unworthy prince, and for this cause: that Pietro di Medici then gave, at the period of one great epoch of consummate power in the arts, the perfect, accurate; and intensest possible type of the greatest error which nations and

⁷ See the noble passage on this tradition in "Casa Guidi Windows."

princes can commit, respecting the power of genius entrusted to their guidance. You had there, observe, the strongest genius in the most perfect obedience; capable of iron independence, yet wholly submissive to the patron's will; at once the most highly accomplished and the most original, capable of doing as much as man could do, in any direction that man could ask. And its governour, and guide, and patron sets it to build a statue in snow—to put itself into the service of annihilation—to make a cloud of itself, and pass away from the earth.

Now this, so precisely and completely done by Pietro di Medici, is what we are all doing, exactly in the degree in which we direct the genius under our patronage to work in more or less perishable materials. So far as we induce painters to work in fading colours, or architects to build with imperfect structure, or in any other way consult only immediate ease and cheapness in the production of what we want, to the exclusion of provident thought as to its permanence and serviceableness in after ages; so far we are forcing our Michael Angelos to carve in snow. The first duty of the economist in art is, to see that no intellect shall thus glitter merely in the manner of hoar-frost; but that it shall be well vitrified, like a painted window, and shall be set so between shafts of stone and bands of iron, that it shall bear the sunshine upon it, and send the sunshine through it, from generation to generation.

I can conceive, however, some political economist to interrupt me here, and say, "If you make your art wear too well, you

will soon have too much of it; you will throw your artists quite out of work. Better allow for a little wholesome evanescence—beneficent destruction: let each age provide art for itself, or we shall soon have so many good pictures that we shall not know what to do with them."

Remember, my dear hearers, who are thus thinking, that political economy, like every other subject, cannot be dealt with effectively if we try to solve two questions at a time instead of one. It is one question, how to get plenty of a thing; and another, whether plenty of it will be good for us. Consider these two matters separately; never confuse yourself by interweaving one with the other. It is one question, how to treat your fields so as to get a good harvest; another, whether you wish to have a good harvest, or would rather like to keep up the price of corn. It is one question, how to graft your trees so as to grow most apples; and quite another, whether having such a heap of apples in the store-room will not make them all rot.

Now, therefore, that we are talking only about grafting and growing, pray do not vex yourselves with thinking what you are to do with the pippins. It may be desirable for us to have much art, or little—we will examine that by and by; but just now, let us keep to the simple consideration how to get plenty of good art if we want it. Perhaps it might be just as well that a man of moderate income should be able to possess a good picture, as that any work of real merit should cost £500 or £1,000; at all events, it is certainly one of the branches of political economy to

ascertain how, if we like, we can get things in quantities—plenty of corn, plenty of wine, plenty of gold, or plenty of pictures.

It has just been said, that the first great secret is to produce work that will last. Now, the conditions of work lasting are twofold: it must not only be in materials that will last, but it must be itself of a quality that will last—it must be good enough to bear the test of time. If it is not good, we shall tire of it quickly, and throw it aside—we shall have no pleasure in the accumulation of it. So that the first question of a good art-economist respecting any work is, Will it lose its flavour by keeping? It may be very amusing now, and look much like a work of genius. But what will be its value a hundred years hence?

You cannot always ascertain this. You may get what you fancy to be work of the best quality, and yet find to your astonishment that it won't keep. But of one thing you may be sure, that art which is produced hastily will also perish hastily; and that what is cheapest to you now, is likely to be dearest in the end.

I am sorry to say, the great tendency of this age is to expend its genius in perishable art of this kind, as if it were a triumph to burn its thoughts away in bonfires. There is a vast quantity of intellect and of labour consumed annually in our cheap illustrated publications; you triumph in them; and you think it is so grand a thing to get so many woodcuts for a penny. Why, woodcuts, penny and all, are as much lost to you as if you had invested your money in gossamer. More lost, for the gossamer could only tickle your face, and glitter in your eyes; it could not catch your feet and

trip you up: but the bad art can, and does; for you can't like good woodcuts as long as you look at the bad ones. If we were at this moment to come across a Titian woodcut, or a Durer woodcut, we should not like it—those of us at least who are accustomed to the cheap work of the day. We don't like, and can't like, *that* long; but when we are tired of one bad cheap thing, we throw it aside and buy another bad cheap thing; and so keep looking at bad things all our lives. Now, the very men who do all that quick bad work for us are capable of doing perfect work. Only, perfect work can't be hurried, and therefore it can't be cheap beyond a certain point. But suppose you pay twelve times as much as you do now, and you have one woodcut for a shilling instead of twelve; and the one woodcut for a shilling is as good as art can be, so that you will never tire of looking at it; and is struck on good paper with good ink, so that you will never wear it out by handling it; while you are sick of your penny-each cuts by the end of the week, and have torn them mostly in half too. Isn't your shilling's worth the best bargain?

It is not, however, only in getting prints or woodcuts of the best kind that you will practise economy. There is a certain quality about an original drawing which you cannot get in a woodcut, and the best part of the genius of many men is only expressible in original work, whether with pen and ink—pencil or colours. This is not always the case; but in general, the best men are those who can only express themselves on paper or canvass; and you will, therefore, in the long run, get most for your money by

buying original work; proceeding on the principle already laid down, that the best is likely to be the cheapest in the end. Of course, original work cannot be produced under a certain cost. If you want a man to make you a drawing which takes him six days, you must, at all events, keep him for six days in bread and water, fire and lodging; that is the lowest price at which he can do it for you, but that is not very dear: and the best bargain which can possibly be made honestly in art—the very ideal of a cheap purchase to the purchaser—is the original work of a great man fed for as many days as are necessary on bread and water, or perhaps we may say with as many onions as will keep him in good humour. That is the way by which you will always get most for your money; no mechanical multiplication or ingenuity of commercial arrangements will ever get you a better penny's worth of art than that.

Without, however, pushing our calculations quite to this prison-discipline extreme, we may lay it down as a rule in art-economy, that original work is, on the whole, cheapest and best worth having. But precisely in proportion to the value of it as a production, becomes the importance of having it executed in permanent materials. And here we come to note the second main error of the day, that we not only ask our workmen for bad art, but we make them put it into bad substance. We have, for example, put a great quantity of genius, within the last twenty years, into water-colour drawing, and we have done this with the most reckless disregard whether either the colours or the paper

will stand. In most instances, neither will. By accident, it may happen that the colours in a given drawing have been of good quality, and its paper uninjured by chemical processes. But you take not the least care to ensure these being so; I have myself seen the most destructive changes take place in water-colour drawings within twenty years after they were painted; and from all I can gather respecting the recklessness of modern paper manufacture, my belief is, that though you may still handle an Albert Durer engraving, two hundred years old, fearlessly, not one-half of that time will have passed over your modern water-colours, before most of them will be reduced to mere white or brown rags; and your descendants, twitching them contemptuously into fragments between finger and thumb, will mutter against you, half in scorn and half in anger, "Those wretched nineteenth-century people! they kept vapouring and fuming about the world, doing what they called business, and they couldn't make a sheet of paper that wasn't rotten." And note that this is no unimportant portion of your art economy at this time. Your water-colour painters are becoming every day capable of expressing greater and better things; and their material is especially adapted to the turn of your best artists' minds. The value which you could accumulate in work of this kind would soon become a most important item in the national art-wealth, if only you would take the little pains necessary to secure its permanence. I am inclined to think, myself, that water-colour ought not to be used on paper at all, but only on vellum, and then, if properly taken

care of, the drawing would be almost imperishable. Still, paper is a much more convenient material for rapid work; and it is an infinite absurdity not to secure the goodness of its quality, when we could do so without the slightest trouble. Among the many favours which I am going to ask from our paternal government, when we get it, will be that it will supply its little boys with good paper. You have nothing to do but to let the government establish a paper manufactory, under the superintendence of any of our leading chemists, who should be answerable for the safety and completeness of all the processes of the manufacture. The government stamp on the corner of your sheet of drawing-paper, made in the perfect way, should cost you a shilling, which would add something to the revenue; and when you bought a water-colour drawing for fifty or a hundred guineas, you would have merely to look in the corner for your stamp, and pay your extra shilling for the security that your hundred guineas were given really for a drawing, and not for a coloured rag. There need be no monopoly or restriction in the matter; let the paper manufacturers compete with the government, and if people liked to save their shilling, and take their chance, let them; only, the artist and purchaser might then be sure of good material, if they liked, and now they cannot be.

I should like also to have a government colour manufactory; though that is not so necessary, as the quality of colour is more within the artist's power of testing, and I have no doubt that any painter may get permanent colour from the respectable

manufacturers, if he chooses. I will not attempt to follow the subject out at all as it respects architecture, and our methods of modern building; respecting which I have had occasion to speak before now.

But I cannot pass without some brief notice our habit—continually, as it seems to me, gaining strength—of putting a large quantity of thought and work, annually, into things which are either in their nature necessarily perishable, as dress; or else into compliances with the fashion of the day, in things not necessarily perishable, as plate. I am afraid almost the first idea of a young rich couple setting up house in London, is, that they must have new plate. Their father's plate may be very handsome, but the fashion is changed. They will have a new service from the leading manufacturer, and the old plate, except a few apostle spoons, and a cup which Charles the Second drank a health in to their pretty ancestress, is sent to be melted down, and made up with new flourishes and fresh lustre. Now, so long as this is the case—so long, observe, as fashion has influence on the manufacture of plate—so long *you cannot have a goldsmith's art in this country*. Do you suppose any workman worthy the name will put his brains into a cup or an urn, which he knows is to go to the melting pot in half a score years? He will not; you don't ask or expect it of him. You ask of him nothing but a little quick handicraft—a clever twist of a handle here, and a foot there, a convolvulus from the newest school of design, a pheasant from Landseer's game cards; a couple of sentimental figures for

supporters, in the style of the signs of insurance offices, then a clever touch with the burnisher, and there's your epergne, the admiration of all the footmen at the wedding-breakfast, and the torment of some unfortunate youth who cannot see the pretty girl opposite to him, through its tyrannous branches.

But you don't suppose that *that's* goldsmith's work? Goldsmith's work is made to last, and made with the man's whole heart and soul in it; true goldsmith's work, when it exists, is generally the means of education of the greatest painters and sculptors of the day. Francia was a goldsmith; Francia was not his own name, but that of his master the jeweller; and he signed his pictures almost always, "Francia, the goldsmith," for love of his master; Ghirlandajo was a goldsmith, and was the master of Michael Angelo; Verrocchio was a goldsmith, and was the master of Leonardo da Vinci. Ghiberti was a goldsmith, and beat out the bronze gates which Michael Angelo said might serve for gates of Paradise.⁸ But if ever you want work like theirs again, you must keep it, though it should have the misfortune to become old fashioned. You must not break it up, nor melt it any more. There is no economy in that; you could not easily waste intellect more

⁸ Several reasons may account for the fact that goldsmith's work is so wholesome for young artists; first, that it gives great firmness of hand to deal for some time with a solid substance; again, that it induces caution and steadiness—a boy trusted with chalk and paper suffers an immediate temptation to scrawl upon it and play with it, but he dares not scrawl on gold, and he cannot play with it; and, lastly, that it gives great delicacy and precision of touch to work upon minute forms, and to aim at producing richness and finish of design correspondent to the preciousness of the material.

grievously. Nature may melt her goldsmith's work at every sunset if she chooses; and beat it out into chased bars again at every sunrise; but you must not. The way to have a truly noble service of plate, is to keep adding to it, not melting it. At every marriage, and at every birth, get a new piece of gold or silver if you will, but with noble workmanship on it, done for all time, and put it among your treasures; that is one of the chief things which gold was made for, and made incorruptible for. When we know a little more of political economy, we shall find that none but partially savage nations need, imperatively, gold for their currency;⁹ but gold has been given us, among other things, that we might put beautiful work into its imperishable splendour, and that the artists who have the most wilful fancies may have a material which will drag out, and beat out, as their dreams require, and will hold itself together with fantastic tenacity, whatever rare and delicate service they set it upon.

So here is one branch of decorative art in which rich people may indulge themselves unselfishly; if they ask for good art in it, they may be sure in buying gold and silver plate that they are enforcing useful education on young artists. But there is another branch of decorative art in which I am sorry to say we cannot, at least under existing circumstances, indulge ourselves, with the hope of doing good to anybody, I mean the great and subtle art of dress.

And here I must interrupt the pursuit of our subject for

⁹ See note in Addenda on the nature of property [p. 107].

a moment or two, in order to state one of the principles of political economy, which, though it is, I believe, now sufficiently understood and asserted by the leading masters of the science, is not yet, I grieve to say, acted upon by the plurality of those who have the management of riches. Whenever we spend money, we of course set people to work: that is the meaning of spending money; we may, indeed, lose it without employing anybody; but, whenever we spend it, we set a number of people to work, greater or less, of course, according to the rate of wages, but, in the long run, proportioned to the sum we spend. Well, your shallow people, because they see that however they spend money they are always employing somebody, and, therefore, doing some good, think and say to themselves, that it is all one *how* they spend it—that all their apparently selfish luxury is, in reality, unselfish, and is doing just as much good as if they gave all their money away, or perhaps more good; and I have heard foolish people even declare it as a principle of political economy, that whoever invented a new want¹⁰ conferred a good on the community. I have not words strong enough—at least I could not, without shocking you, use the words which would be strong enough—to express my estimate of the absurdity and the mischievousness of this popular fallacy. So, putting a great restraint upon myself, and using no hard words, I will simply try to state the nature of it, and the extent of its influence.

Granted, that whenever we spend money for whatever

¹⁰ See [note 5th, in Addenda \[p. 102\]](#).

purpose, we set people to work; and, passing by, for the moment, the question whether the work we set them to is all equally healthy and good for them, we will assume that whenever we spend a guinea we provide an equal number of people with healthy maintenance for a given time. But, by the way in which we spend it, we entirely direct the labour of those people during that given time. We become their masters or mistresses, and we compel them to produce, within a certain period, a certain article. Now, that article may be a useful and lasting one, or it may be a useless and perishable one—it may be one useful to the whole community, or useful only to ourselves. And our selfishness and folly, or our virtue and prudence, are shown, not by our spending money, but by our spending it for the wrong or the right thing; and we are wise and kind, not in maintaining a certain number of people for a given period, but only in requiring them to produce, during that period, the kind of things which shall be useful to society, instead of those which are only useful to ourselves.

Thus, for instance: if you are a young lady, and employ a certain number of sempstresses for a given time, in making a given number of simple and serviceable dresses, suppose, seven; of which you can wear one yourself for half the winter, and give six away to poor girls who have none, you are spending your money unselfishly. But if you employ the same number of sempstresses for the same number of days, in making four, or five, or six beautiful flounces for your own ball-dress—flounces which will clothe no one but yourself, and which you

will yourself be unable to wear at more than one ball—you are employing your money selfishly. You have maintained, indeed, in each case, the same number of people; but in the one case you have directed their labour to the service of the community; in the other case you have consumed it wholly upon yourself. I don't say you are never to do so; I don't say you ought not sometimes to think of yourselves only, and to make yourselves as pretty as you can; only do not confuse coquettishness with benevolence, nor cheat yourselves into thinking that all the finery you can wear is so much put into the hungry mouths of those beneath you: it is not so; it is what you yourselves, whether you will or no, must sometimes instinctively feel it to be—it is what those who stand shivering in the streets, forming a line to watch you as you step out of your carriages, *know* it to be; those fine dresses do not mean that so much has been put into their mouths, but that so much has been taken out of their mouths. The real politico-economical signification of every one of those beautiful toilettes, is just this; that you have had a certain number of people put for a certain number of days wholly under your authority, by the sternest of slave-masters—hunger and cold; and you have said to them, "I will feed you, indeed, and clothe you, and give you fuel for so many days; but during those days you shall work for me only: your little brothers need clothes, but you shall make none for them: your sick friend needs clothes, but you shall make none for her: you yourself will soon need another, and a warmer dress; but you shall make none for yourself. You shall make nothing

but lace and roses for me; for this fortnight to come, you shall work at the patterns and petals, and then I will crush and consume them away in an hour." You will perhaps answer—"It may not be particularly benevolent to do this, and we won't call it so; but at any rate we do no wrong in taking their labour when we pay them their wages: if we pay for their work we have a right to it." No;—a thousand times no. The labour which you have paid for, does indeed become, by the act of purchase, your own labour: you have bought the hands and the time of those workers; they are, by right and justice, your own hands, your own time. But, have you a right to spend your own time, to work with your own hands, only for your own advantage?—much more, when, by purchase, you have invested your own person with the strength of others; and added to your own life, a part of the life of others? You may, indeed, to a certain extent, use their labour for your delight: remember, I am making no general assertions against splendour of dress, or pomp of accessories of life; on the contrary, there are many reasons for thinking that we do not at present attach enough importance to beautiful dress, as one of the means of influencing general taste and character. But I *do* say, that you must weigh the value of what you ask these workers to produce for you in its own distinct balance; that on its own worthiness or desirableness rests the question of your kindness, and not merely on the fact of your having employed people in producing it: and I say farther, that as long as there are cold and nakedness in the land around you, so long there can be no question at all but that splendour

of dress is a crime. In due time, when we have nothing better to set people to work at, it may be right to let them make lace and cut jewels; but, as long as there are any who have no blankets for their beds, and no rags for their bodies, so long it is blanket-making and tailoring we must set people to work at—not lace.

And it would be strange, if at any great assembly which, while it dazzled the young and the thoughtless, beguiled the gentler hearts that beat beneath the embroidery, with a placid sensation of luxurious benevolence—as if by all that they wore in waywardness of beauty, comfort had been first given to the distressed, and aid to the indigent; it would be strange, I say, if, for a moment, the spirits of Truth and of Terror, which walk invisibly among the masques of the earth, would lift the dimness from our erring thoughts, and show us how—inasmuch as the sums exhausted for that magnificence would have given back the failing breath to many an unsheltered outcast on moor and street—they who wear it have literally entered into partnership with Death; and dressed themselves in his spoils. Yes, if the veil could be lifted not only from your thoughts, but from your human sight, you would see—the angels do see—on those gay white dresses of yours, strange dark spots, and crimson patterns that you knew not of—spots of the inextinguishable red that all the seas cannot wash away; yes, and among the pleasant flowers that crown your fair heads, and glow on your wreathed hair, you would see that one weed was always twisted which no one thought of—the grass that grows on graves.

It was not, however, this last, this clearest and most appalling view of our subject, that I intended to ask you to take this evening; only it is impossible to set any part of the matter in its true light, until we go to the root of it. But the point which it is our special business to consider is, not whether costliness of dress is contrary to charity; but whether it is not contrary to mere worldly wisdom: whether, even supposing we knew that splendour of dress did not cost suffering or hunger, we might not put the splendour better in other things than dress. And, supposing our mode of dress were really graceful or beautiful, this might be a very doubtful question; for I believe true nobleness of dress to be an important means of education, as it certainly is a necessity to any nation which wishes to possess living art, concerned with portraiture of human nature. No good historical painting ever yet existed, or ever can exist, where the dresses of the people of the time are not beautiful: and had it not been for the lovely and fantastic dressing of the 13th to the 16th centuries, neither French, nor Florentine, nor Venetian art could have risen to anything like the rank it reached. Still, even then, the best dressing was never the costliest; and its effect depended much more on its beautiful and, in early times, modest, arrangement, and on the simple and lovely masses of its colour, than on gorgeousness of clasp or embroidery. Whether we can ever return to any of those more perfect types of form, is questionable; but there can be no question, that all the money we spend on the forms of dress at present worn, is, so far as any good purpose is concerned, wholly lost. Mind, in saying

this, I reckon among good purposes, the purpose which young ladies are said sometimes to entertain—of being married; but they would be married quite as soon (and probably to wiser and better husbands) by dressing quietly, as by dressing brilliantly: and I believe it would only be needed to lay fairly and largely before them the real good which might be effected by the sums they spend in toilettes, to make them trust at once only to their bright eyes and braided hair for all the mischief they have a mind to. I wish we could, for once, get the statistics of a London season. There was much complaining talk in Parliament last week, of the vast sum the nation has given for the best Paul Veronese in Venice—£14,000: I wonder what the nation meanwhile has given for its ball-dresses! Suppose we could see the London milliners' bills, simply for unnecessary breadths of slip and flounce, from April to July; I wonder whether £14,000 would cover *them*. But the breadths of slip and flounce are by this time as much lost and vanished as last year's snow; only they have done less good: but the Paul Veronese will last for centuries, if we take care of it; and yet we grumble at the price given for the painting, while no one grumbles at the price of pride.

Time does not permit me to go into any farther illustration of the various modes in which we build our statue out of snow, and waste our labour on things that vanish. I must leave you to follow out the subject for yourselves, as I said I should, and proceed, in our next lecture, to examine the two other branches of our subject, namely, how to accumulate our art, and how to distribute

it. But, in closing, as we have been much on the topic of good government, both of ourselves and others, let me just give you one more illustration of what it means, from that old art of which, next evening, I shall try to convince you that the value, both moral and mercantile, is greater than we usually suppose.

One of the frescoes by Ambrozio Lorenzetti, in the town-hall of Siena, represents, by means of symbolical figures, the principles of Good Civic Government and of Good Government in general. The figure representing this noble Civic Government is enthroned, and surrounded by figures representing the Virtues, variously supporting or administering its authority. Now, observe what work is given to each of these virtues. Three winged ones—Faith, Hope, and Charity—surround the head of the figure, not in mere compliance with the common and heraldic laws of precedence among Virtues, such as we moderns observe habitually, but with peculiar purpose on the part of the painter. Faith, as thus represented, ruling the thoughts of the Good Governour, does not mean merely religious faith, understood in those times to be necessary to all persons—governed no less than governours—but it means the faith which enables work to be carried out steadily, in spite of adverse appearances and expedencies; the faith in great principles, by which a civic ruler looks past all the immediate checks and shadows that would daunt a common man, knowing that what is rightly done will have a right issue, and holding his way in spite of pullings at his cloak and whisperings in his ear, enduring, as having in him

a faith which is evidence of things unseen. And Hope, in like manner, is here not the heavenward hope which ought to animate the hearts of all men; but she attends upon Good Government, to show that all such government is *expectant* as well as *conservative*; that if it ceases to be hopeful of better things, it ceases to be a wise guardian of present things: that it ought never, as long as the world lasts, to be wholly content with any existing state of institution or possession, but to be hopeful still of more wisdom and power; not clutching at it restlessly or hastily, but feeling that its real life consists in steady ascent from high to higher: conservative, indeed, and jealously conservative of old things, but conservative of them as pillars, not as pinnacles—as aids, but not as idols; and hopeful chiefly, and active, in times of national trial or distress, according to those first and notable words describing the queenly nation. "She riseth, *while it is yet night*." And again, the winged Charity which is attendant on Good Government has, in this fresco, a peculiar office. Can you guess what? If you consider the character of contest which so often takes place among kings for their crowns, and the selfish and tyrannous means they commonly take to aggrandize or secure their power, you will, perhaps, be surprised to hear that the office of Charity is to crown the King. And yet, if you think of it a little, you will see the beauty of the thought which sets her in this function: since in the first place, all the authority of a good governor should be desired by him only for the good of his people, so that it is only Love that makes him accept or guard

his crown: in the second place, his chief greatness consists in the exercise of this love, and he is truly to be revered only so far as his acts and thoughts are those of kindness; so that Love is the light of his crown, as well as the giver of it: lastly, because his strength depends on the affections of his people, and it is only their love which can securely crown him, and for ever. So that Love is the strength of his crown as well as the light of it.

Then, surrounding the King, or in various obedience to him, appear the dependent virtues, as Fortitude, Temperance, Truth, and other attendant spirits, of all which I cannot now give account, wishing you only to notice the one to whom are entrusted the guidance and administration of the public revenues. Can you guess which it is likely to be? Charity, you would have thought, should have something to do with the business; but not so, for she is too hot to attend carefully to it. Prudence, perhaps, you think of in the next place. No, she is too timid, and loses opportunities in making up her mind. Can it be Liberality then? No: Liberality is entrusted with some small sums; but she is a bad accountant, and is allowed no important place in the exchequer. But the treasures are given in charge to a virtue of which we hear too little in modern times, as distinct from others; Magnanimity: largeness of heart: not softness or weakness of heart, mind you—but capacity of heart—the great *measuring* virtue, which weighs in heavenly balances all that may be given, and all that may be gained; and sees how to do noblest things in noblest ways: which of two goods comprehends and therefore

chooses the greatest: which of two personal sacrifices dares and accepts the largest: which, out of the avenues of beneficence, treads always that which opens farthest into the blue fields of futurity: that character, in fine, which, in those words taken by us at first for the description of a Queen among the nations, looks less to the present power than to the distant promise; "Strength and honour are in her clothing—and she shall rejoice IN TIME TO COME."

LECTURE II

The heads of our subject which remain for our consideration this evening are, you will remember, the accumulation and the distribution of works of art. Our complete inquiry fell into four divisions—first, how to get our genius; then, how to apply our genius; then, how to accumulate its results; and lastly, how to distribute them. We considered, last evening, how to discover and apply it;—we have to-night to examine the modes of its preservation and distribution.

III. Accumulation.—And now, in the outset, it will be well to face that objection which we put aside a little while ago; namely, that perhaps it is not well to have a great deal of good art; and that it should not be made too cheap.

"Nay," I can imagine some of the more generous among you, exclaiming, "we will not trouble you to disprove that objection; of course it is a selfish and base one: good art, as well as other good things, ought to be made as cheap as possible, and put as far as we can within the reach of everybody."

Pardon me, I am not prepared to admit that. I rather side with the selfish objectors, and believe that art ought not to be made cheap, beyond a certain point; for the amount of pleasure that you can receive from any great work, depends wholly on the quantity of attention and energy of mind you can bring to bear upon it. Now, that attention and energy depend much more

on the freshness of the thing than you would at all suppose; unless you very carefully studied the movements of your own minds. If you see things of the same kind and of equal value very frequently, your reverence for them is infallibly diminished, your powers of attention get gradually wearied, and your interest and enthusiasm worn out; and you cannot in that state bring to any given work the energy necessary to enjoy it. If, indeed, the question were only between enjoying a great many pictures each a little, or one picture very much, the sum of enjoyment being in each case the same, you might rationally desire to possess rather the larger quantity, than the small; both because one work of art always in some sort illustrates another, and because quantity diminishes the chances of destruction. But the question is not a merely arithmetical one of this kind. Your fragments of broken admirations will not, when they are put together, make up one whole admiration; two and two, in this case, do not make four, nor anything like four. Your good picture, or book, or work of art of any kind, is always in some degree fenced and closed about with difficulty. You may think of it as of a kind of cocoa-nut, with very often rather an unseemly shell, but good milk and kernel inside. Now, if you possess twenty cocoa-nuts, and being thirsty, go impatiently from one to the other, giving only a single scratch with the point of your knife to the shell of each, you will get no milk from all the twenty. But if you leave nineteen of them alone, and give twenty cuts to the shell of one, you will get through it, and at the milk of it. And the tendency of the human

mind is always to get tired before it has made its twenty cuts; and to try another nut; and moreover, even if it has perseverance enough to crack its nuts, it is sure to try to eat too many, and so choke itself. Hence, it is wisely appointed for us that few of the things we desire can be had without considerable labour, and at considerable intervals of time. We cannot generally get our dinner without working for it, and that gives us appetite for it; we cannot get our holiday without waiting for it, and that gives us zest for it; and we ought not to get our picture without paying for it, and that gives us a mind to look at it. Nay, I will even go so far as to say, that we ought not to get books too cheaply. No book, I believe, is ever worth half so much to its reader as one that has been coveted for a year at a bookstall, and bought out of saved half-pence; and perhaps a day or two's fasting. That's the way to get at the cream of a book. And I should say more on this matter, and protest as energetically as I could against the plague of cheap literature, with which we are just now afflicted, but that I fear your calling me to order, as being impractical, because I don't quite see my way at present to making everybody fast for their books. But one may see that a thing is desirable and possible, even though one may not at once know the best way to it—and in my island of Barataria, when I get it well into order, I assure you no book shall be sold for less than a pound sterling; if it can be published cheaper than that, the surplus shall all go into my treasury, and save my subjects taxation in other directions; only people really poor, who cannot pay the

pound, shall be supplied with the books they want for nothing, in a certain limited quantity. I haven't made up my mind about the number yet, and there are several other points in the system yet unsettled; when they are all determined, if you will allow me, I will come and give you another lecture, on the political economy of literature.¹¹

Meantime, returning to our immediate subject, I say to my generous hearers, who want to shower Titians and Turners upon us, like falling leaves, "Pictures ought not to be too cheap;" but in much stronger tone I would say to those who want to keep up the prices of pictorial property, that pictures ought not to be too dear, that is to say, not as dear as they are. For, as matters at present stand, it is wholly impossible for any man in the ordinary circumstances of English life to possess himself of a piece of great art. A modern drawing of average merit, or a first-class engraving, may perhaps, not without some self-reproach, be purchased out of his savings by a man of narrow income; but a satisfactory example of first-rate art—masterhands' work—is wholly out of his reach. And we are so accustomed to look upon this as the natural course and necessity of things, that we never set ourselves in any wise to diminish the evil; and yet it is an evil perfectly capable of diminution. It is an evil precisely similar in kind to that which existed in the middle ages, respecting good books, and which everybody then, I suppose, thought as natural as we do now our small supply of good pictures. You could not

¹¹ See [note 6th, in Addenda \[p. 104\]](#).

then study the work of a great historian, or great poet, any more than you can now study that of a great painter, but at heavy cost. If you wanted a book, you had to get it written out for you, or to write it out for yourself. But printing came, and the poor man may read his Dante and his Homer; and Dante and Homer are none the worse for that. But it is only in literature that private persons of moderate fortune can possess and study greatness: they can study at home no greatness in art; and the object of that accumulation which we are at present aiming at, as our third object in political economy, is to bring great art in some degree within the reach of the multitude; and, both in larger and more numerous galleries than we now possess, and by distribution, according to his wealth and wish, in each man's home, to render the influence of art somewhat correspondent in extent to that of literature. Here, then, is the subtle balance which your economist has to strike: to accumulate so much art as to be able to give the whole nation a supply of it, according to its need, and yet to regulate its distribution so that there shall be no glut of it, nor contempt.

A difficult balance, indeed, for us to hold, if it were left merely to our skill to poise; but the just point between poverty and profusion has been fixed for us accurately by the wise laws of Providence. If you carefully watch for all the genius you can detect, apply it to good service, and then reverently preserve what it produces, you will never have too little art; and if, on the other hand, you never force an artist to work hurriedly, for daily bread,

nor imperfectly, because you would rather have showy works than complete ones, you will never have too much. Do not force the multiplication of art, and you will not have it too cheap; do not wantonly destroy it, and you will not have it too dear.

"But who wantonly destroys it?" you will ask. Why, we all do. Perhaps you thought, when I came to this part of our subject, corresponding to that set forth in our housewife's economy by the "keeping her embroidery from the moth," that I was going to tell you only how to take better care of pictures, how to clean them, and varnish them, and where to put them away safely when you went out of town. Ah, not at all. The utmost I have to ask of you is, that you will not pull them to pieces, and trample them under your feet. "What!" you will say, "when do we do such things? Haven't we built a perfectly beautiful gallery for all the pictures we have to take care of?" Yes, you have, for the pictures which are definitely sent to Manchester to be taken care of. But there are quantities of pictures out of Manchester which it is your business, and mine too, to take care of no less than of these, and which we are at this moment employing ourselves in pulling to pieces by deputy. I will tell you what they are, and where they are, in a minute; only first let me state one more of those main principles of political economy on which the matter hinges.

I must begin a little apparently wide of the mark, and ask you to reflect if there is any way in which we waste money more in England, than in building fine tombs? Our respect for the dead, when they are *just* dead, is something wonderful, and the way we

show it more wonderful still. We show it with black feathers and black horses; we show it with black dresses and bright heraldries; we show it with costly obelisks and sculptures of sorrow, which spoil half of our most beautiful cathedrals. We show it with frightful gratings and vaults, and lids of dismal stone, in the midst of the quiet grass; and last, and not least, we show it by permitting ourselves to tell any number of lies we think amiable or credible, in the epitaph. This feeling is common to the poor as well as the rich, and we all know how many a poor family will nearly ruin themselves, to testify their respect for some member of it in his coffin, whom they never much cared for when he was out of it; and how often it happens that a poor old woman will starve herself to death, in order that she may be respectably buried.

Now, this being one of the most complete and special ways of wasting money;—no money being less productive of good, or of any percentage whatever, than that which we shake away from the ends of undertakers' plumes—it is of course the duty of all good economists, and kind persons, to prove and proclaim continually, to the poor as well as the rich, that respect for the dead is not really shown by laying great stones on them to tell us where they are laid; but by remembering where they are laid, without a stone to help us; trusting them to the sacred grass and saddened flowers; and still more, that respect and love are shown to them, not by great monuments to them which we build with *our* hands, but by letting the monuments stand, which they built with *their own*. And this is the point now in question.

Observe, there are two great reciprocal duties concerning industry, constantly to be exchanged between the living and the dead. We, as we live and work, are to be always thinking of those who are to come after us; that what we do may be serviceable, as far as we can make it so, to them as well as to us. Then, when we die, it is the duty of those who come after us to accept this work of ours with thanks and remembrance, not thrusting it aside or tearing it down the moment they think they have no use for it. And each generation will only be happy or powerful to the pitch that it ought to be, in fulfilling these two duties to the Past and the Future. Its own work will never be rightly done, even for itself—never good, or noble, or pleasurable to its own eyes—if it does not prepare it also for the eyes of generations yet to come. And its own possessions will never be enough for it, and its own wisdom never enough for it, unless it avails itself gratefully and tenderly of the treasures and the wisdom bequeathed to it by its ancestors.

For, be assured, that all the best things and treasures of this world are not to be produced by each generation for itself; but we are all intended, not to carve our work in snow that will melt, but each and all of us to be continually rolling a great white gathering snowball, higher and higher—larger and larger—along the Alps of human power. Thus the science of nations is to be accumulative from father to son: each learning a little more and a little more; each receiving all that was known, and adding its own gain: the history and poetry of nations are to be accumulative; each generation treasuring the history and the

songs of its ancestors, adding its own history and its own songs; and the art of nations is to be accumulative, just as science and history are; the work of living men not superseding, but building itself upon the work of the past. Nearly every great and intellectual race of the world has produced, at every period of its career, an art with some peculiar and precious character about it, wholly unattainable by any other race, and at any other time; and the intention of Providence concerning that art, is evidently that it should all grow together into one mighty temple; the rough stones and the smooth all finding their place, and rising, day by day, in richer and higher pinnacles to heaven.

Now, just fancy what a position the world, considered as one great workroom—one great factory in the form of a globe—would have been in by this time, if it had in the least understood this duty, or been capable of it. Fancy what we should have had around us now, if, instead of quarrelling and fighting over their work, the nations had aided each other in their work, or if even in their conquests, instead of effacing the memorials of those they succeeded and subdued, they had guarded the spoils of their victories. Fancy what Europe would be now, if the delicate statues and temples of the Greeks,—if the broad roads and massy walls of the Romans,—if the noble and pathetic architecture of the middle ages, had not been ground to dust by mere human rage. You talk of the scythe of Time, and the tooth of Time: I tell you, Time is scytheless and toothless; it is we who gnaw like the worm—we who smite like the scythe. It is ourselves who abolish

—ourselves who consume: we are the mildew, and the flame, and the soul of man is to its own work as the moth, that frets when it cannot fly, and as the hidden flame that blasts where it cannot illumine. All these lost treasures of human intellect have been wholly destroyed by human industry of destruction; the marble would have stood its two thousand years as well in the polished statue as in the Parian cliff; but we men have ground it to powder, and mixed it with our own ashes. The walls and the ways would have stood—it is we who have left not one stone upon another, and restored its pathlessness to the desert; the great cathedrals of old religion would have stood—it is we who have dashed down the carved work with axes and hammers, and bid the mountain-grass bloom upon the pavement, and the sea-winds chaunt in the galleries.

You will perhaps think all this was somehow necessary for the development of the human race. I cannot stay now to dispute that, though I would willingly; but do you think it is *still* necessary for that development? Do you think that in this nineteenth century it is still necessary for the European nations to turn all the places where their principal art-treasures are into battle-fields? For that is what they are doing even while I speak; the great firm of the world is managing its business at this moment, just as it has done in past time. Imagine what would be the thriving circumstances of a manufacturer of some delicate produce—suppose glass, or china—in whose workshop and exhibition rooms all the workmen and clerks began fighting

at least once a day, first blowing off the steam, and breaking all the machinery they could reach; and then making fortresses of all the cupboards, and attacking and defending the show-tables, the victorious party finally throwing everything they could get hold of out of the window, by way of showing their triumph, and the poor manufacturer picking up and putting away at last a cup here and a handle there. A fine prosperous business that would be, would it not? and yet that is precisely the way the great manufacturing firm of the world carries on its business.

It has so arranged its political squabbles for the last six or seven hundred years, that not one of them could be fought out but in the midst of its most precious art; and it so arranges them to this day. For example, if I were asked to lay my finger, in a map of the world, on the spot of the world's surface which contained at this moment the most singular concentration of art-teaching and art-treasure, I should lay it on the name of the town of Verona. Other cities, indeed, contain more works of carriageable art, but none contain so much of the glorious local art, and of the springs and sources of art, which can by no means be made subjects of package or portorage, nor, I grieve to say, of salvage. Verona possesses, in the first place, not the largest, but the most perfect and intelligible Roman amphitheatre that exists, still unbroken in circle of step, and strong in succession of vault and arch: it contains minor Roman monuments, gateways, theatres, baths, wrecks of temples, which give the streets of its suburbs a character of antiquity unexampled elsewhere, except

in Rome itself. But it contains, in the next place, what Rome does not contain—perfect examples of the great twelfth-century Lombardic architecture, which was the root of all the mediæval art of Italy, without which no Giotto's, no Angelico's, no Raphael's would have been possible: it contains that architecture, not in rude forms, but in the most perfect and loveliest types it ever attained—contains those, not in ruins, nor in altered and hardly decipherable fragments, but in churches perfect from porch to apse, with all their carving fresh, their pillars firm, their joints unloosened. Besides these, it includes examples of the great thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Gothic of Italy, not merely perfect, but elsewhere unrivalled. At Rome, the Roman—at Pisa, the Lombard, architecture may be seen in greater or in equal nobleness; but not at Rome, nor Pisa, nor Florence, nor in any city of the world, is there a great mediæval Gothic like the Gothic of Verona. Elsewhere, it is either less pure in type or less lovely in completion: only at Verona may you see it in the simplicity of its youthful power, and the tenderness of its accomplished beauty. And Verona possesses, in the last place, the loveliest Renaissance architecture of Italy, not disturbed by pride, nor defiled by luxury, but rising in fair fulfilment of domestic service, serenity of effortless grace, and modesty of home seclusion; its richest work given to the windows that open on the narrowest streets and most silent gardens. All this she possesses, in the midst of natural scenery such as assuredly exists nowhere else in the habitable globe—a wild Alpine river foaming at her feet, from whose shore

the rocks rise in a great crescent, dark with cypress, and misty with olive: illimitably, from before her southern gates, the tufted plains of Italy sweep and fade in golden light; around her, north and west, the Alps crowd in crested troops, and the winds of Benacus bear to her the coolness of their snows.

And this is the city—such, and possessing such things as these—at whose gates the decisive battles of Italy are fought continually: three days her towers trembled with the echo of the cannon of Arcola; heaped pebbles of the Mincio divide her fields to this hour with lines of broken rampart, whence the tide of war rolled back to Novara; and now on that crescent of her eastern cliffs, whence the full moon used to rise through the bars of the cypresses in her burning summer twilights, touching with soft increase of silver light the rosy marbles of her balconies—along the ridge of that encompassing rock, other circles are increasing now, white and pale; walled towers of cruel strength, sable-spotted with cannon-courses. I tell you, I have seen, when the thunderclouds came down on those Italian hills, and all their crags were dipped in the dark, terrible purple, as if the winepress of the wrath of God had stained their mountain-raiment—I have seen the hail fall in Italy till the forest branches stood stripped and bare as if blasted by the locust; but the white hail never fell from those clouds of heaven as the black hail will fall from the clouds of hell, if ever one breath of Italian life stirs again in the streets of Verona.

Sad as you will feel this to be, I do not say that you can directly

prevent it; you cannot drive the Austrians out of Italy, nor prevent them from building forts where they choose. But I do say,¹² that you, and I, and all of us, ought to be both acting and feeling with a full knowledge and understanding of these things, and that, without trying to excite revolutions or weaken governments, we may give our own thoughts and help, so as in a measure to prevent needless destruction. We should do this, if we only realized the thing thoroughly. You drive out day by day through your own pretty suburbs, and you think only of making, with what money you have to spare, your gateways handsomer, and your carriage-drives wider—and your drawing-rooms more splendid, having a vague notion that you are all the while patronizing and advancing art, and you make no effort to conceal the fact, that within a few

¹² The reader can hardly but remember Mrs. Browning's beautiful appeal for Italy, made on the occasion of the first great Exhibition of Art in England:—"O Magi of the east and of the west, Your incense, gold, and myrrh are excellent!—What gifts for Christ, then, bring ye with the rest? Your hands have worked well. Is your courage spent In handwork only? Have you nothing best, Which generous souls may perfect and present, And He shall thank the givers for? no light Of teaching, liberal nations, for the poor, Who sit in darkness when it is not night? No cure for wicked children? Christ, —no cure, No help for women, sobbing out of sight Because men made the laws? no brothel-lure Burnt out by popular lightnings? Hast thou found No remedy, my England, for such woes? No outlet, Austria, for the scourged and bound, No call back for the exiled? no repose, Russia, for knouted Poles worked underground, And gentle ladies bleached among the snows? No mercy for the slave, America? No hope for Rome, free France, chivalric France? Alas, great nations have great shames, I say. No pity, O world, no tender utterance Of benediction, and prayers stretched this way For poor Italia, baffled by mischance? O gracious nations, give some ear to me! You all go to your Fair, and I am one Who at the roadside of humanity Beseech your alms,—God's justice to be done. So, prosper!"

hours' journey of you, there are gateways and drawing-rooms which might just as well be yours as these, all built already; gateways built by the greatest masters of sculpture that ever struck marble; drawing-rooms, painted by Titian and Veronese; and you won't accept, nor save these as they are, but you will rather fetch the house-painter from over the way, and let Titian and Veronese house the rats. "Yes," of course, you answer; "we want nice houses here, not houses in Verona. What should we do with houses in Verona?" And I answer, do precisely what you do with the most expensive part of your possessions here: take pride in them—only a noble pride. You know well, when you examine your own hearts, that the greater part of the sums you spend on possessions are spent for pride. Why are your carriages nicely painted and finished outside? You don't see the outsides as you sit in them—the outsides are for other people to see. Why are your exteriors of houses so well finished, your furniture so polished and costly, but for other people to see? You are just as comfortable yourselves, writing on your old friend of a desk, with the white cloudings in his leather, and using the light of a window which is nothing but a hole in the brick wall. And all that is desirable to be done in this matter, is merely to take pride in preserving great art, instead of in producing mean art; pride in the possession of precious and enduring things, a little way off, instead of slight and perishing things near at hand. You know, in old English times, our kings liked to have lordships and dukedoms abroad, and why should not you merchant princes

like to have lordships and estates abroad? Believe me, rightly understood, it would be a prouder, and in the full sense of our English word, more "respectable" thing to be lord of a palace at Verona, or of a cloister full of frescos at Florence, than to have a file of servants dressed in the finest liveries that ever tailor stitched, as long as would reach from here to Bolton:—yes, and a prouder thing to send people to travel in Italy, who would have to say every now and then, of some fair piece of art, "Ah! this was *kept* here for us by the good people of Manchester," than to bring them travelling all the way here, exclaiming of your various art treasures, "These were *brought* here for us, (not altogether without harm) by the good people of Manchester." "Ah!" but you say, "the Art Treasures Exhibition will pay; but Veronese palaces won't." Pardon me. They *would* pay, less directly, but far more richly. Do you suppose it is in the long run good for Manchester, or good for England, that the Continent should be in the state it is? Do you think the perpetual fear of revolution, or the perpetual repression of thought and energy that clouds and encumbers the nations of Europe, is eventually profitable for *us*? Were we any the better of the course of affairs in '48; or has the stabling of the dragoon horses in the great houses of Italy, any distinct effect in the promotion of the cotton-trade? Not so. But every stake that you could hold in the stability of the Continent, and every effort that you could make to give example of English habits and principles on the Continent, and every kind deed that you could do in relieving distress and preventing despair on the Continent,

would have tenfold reaction on the prosperity of England, and open and urge, in a thousand unforeseen directions, the sluices of commerce and the springs of industry.

I could press, if I chose, both these motives upon you, of pride and self-interest, with more force, but these are not motives which ought to be urged upon you at all. The only motive that I ought to put before you is simply that it would be right to do this; that the holding of property abroad, and the personal efforts of Englishmen to redeem the condition of foreign nations, are among the most direct pieces of duty which our wealth renders incumbent upon us. I do not—and in all truth and deliberateness I say this—I do not know anything more ludicrous among the self-deceptions of well-meaning people than their notion of patriotism, as requiring them to limit their efforts to the good of their own country;—the notion that charity is a geographical virtue, and that what it is holy and righteous to do for people on one bank of a river, it is quite improper and unnatural to do for people on the other. It will be a wonderful thing, some day or other, for the Christian world to remember, that it went on thinking for two thousand years that neighbours were neighbours at Jerusalem, but not at Jericho; a wonderful thing for us English to reflect, in after-years, how long it was before we could shake hands with anybody across that shallow salt wash, which the very chalk-dust of its two shores whitens from Folkestone to Ambleteuse.

Nor ought the motive of gratitude, as well as that of mercy, to

be without its influence on you, who have been the first to ask to see, and the first to show to us, the treasures which this poor lost Italy has given to England. Remember all these things that delight you here were hers—hers either in fact or in teaching; hers, in fact, are all the most powerful and most touching paintings of old time that now glow upon your walls; hers in teaching are all the best and greatest of descendant souls—your Reynolds and your Gainsborough never could have painted but for Venice; and the energies which have given the only true life to your existing art were first stirred by voices of the dead, that haunted the Sacred Field of Pisa.

Well, all these motives for some definite course of action on our part towards foreign countries rest upon very serious facts; too serious, perhaps you will think, to be interfered with; for we are all of us in the habit of leaving great things alone, as if Providence would mind them, and attending ourselves only to little things which we know, practically, Providence doesn't mind unless we do. We are ready enough to give care to the growing of pines and lettuces, knowing that they don't grow Providentially sweet or large unless we look after them; but we don't give any care to the good of Italy or Germany, because we think that they will grow Providentially happy without any of our meddling.

Let us leave the great things, then, and think of little things; not of the destruction of whole provinces in war, which it may not be any business of ours to prevent; but of the destruction of poor little pictures in peace, from which it surely would not be much

out of our way to save them. You know I said, just now, we were all of us engaged in pulling pictures to pieces by deputy, and you did not believe me. Consider, then, this similitude of ourselves. Suppose you saw (as I doubt not you often do see) a prudent and kind young lady sitting at work, in the corner of a quiet room, knitting comforters for her cousins, and that just outside, in the hall, you saw a cat and her kittens at play among the family pictures; amusing themselves especially with the best Vandykes, by getting on the tops of the frames, and then scrambling down the canvasses by their claws; and on someone's informing the young lady of these proceedings of the cat and kittens, suppose she answered that it wasn't her cat, but her sister's, and the pictures weren't hers, but her uncle's, and she couldn't leave her work, for she had to make so many pairs of comforters before dinner. Would you not say that the prudent and kind young lady was, on the whole, answerable for the additional touches of claw on the Vandykes? Now, that is precisely what we prudent and kind English are doing, only on a larger scale. Here we sit in Manchester, hard at work, very properly, making comforters for our cousins all over the world. Just outside there in the hall—that beautiful marble hall of Italy—the cats and kittens and monkeys are at play among the pictures: I assure you, in the course of the fifteen years in which I have been working in those places in which the most precious remnants of European art exist, a sensation, whether I would or no, was gradually made distinct and deep in my mind, that I was living and working in the midst

of a den of monkeys;—sometimes amiable and affectionate monkeys, with all manner of winning ways and kind intentions;—more frequently selfish and malicious monkeys, but, whatever their disposition, squabbling continually about nuts, and the best places on the barren sticks of trees; and that all this monkeys' den was filled, by mischance, with precious pictures, and the witty and wilful beasts were always wrapping themselves up and going to sleep in pictures, or tearing holes in them to grin through; or tasting them and spitting them out again, or twisting them up into ropes and making swings of them; and that sometimes only, by watching one's opportunity, and bearing a scratch or a bite, one could rescue the corner of a Tintoret, or Paul Veronese, and push it through the bars into a place of safety. Literally, I assure you, this was, and this is, the fixed impression on my mind of the state of matters in Italy. And see how. The professors of art in Italy, having long followed a method of study peculiar to themselves, have at last arrived at a form of art peculiar to themselves; very different from that which was arrived at by Correggio and Titian. Naturally, the professors like their own form the best; and, as the old pictures are generally not so startling to the eye as the modern ones, the dukes and counts who possess them, and who like to see their galleries look new and fine (and are persuaded also that a celebrated chef-d'œuvre ought always to catch the eye at a quarter of a mile off), believe the professors who tell them their sober pictures are quite faded, and good for nothing, and should all be brought bright again; and, accordingly, give the

sober pictures to the professors, to be put right by rules of art. Then, the professors repaint the old pictures in all the principal places, leaving perhaps only a bit of background to set off their own work. And thus the professors come to be generally figured in my mind, as the monkeys who tear holes in the pictures, to grin through. Then the picture-dealers, who live by the pictures, cannot sell them to the English in their old and pure state; all the good work must be covered with new paint, and varnished so as to look like one of the professorial pictures in the great gallery, before it is saleable. And thus the dealers come to be imaged, in my mind, as the monkeys who make ropes of the pictures, to swing by. Then, every now and then, in some old stable or wine-cellar, or timber-shed, behind some forgotten vats or faggots, somebody finds a fresco of Perugino's or Giotto's, but doesn't think much of it, and has no idea of having people coming into his cellar, or being obliged to move his faggots; and so he whitewashes the fresco, and puts the faggots back again; and these kind of persons, therefore, come generally to be imaged in my mind, as the monkeys who taste the pictures, and spit them out, not finding them nice. While, finally, the squabbling for nuts and apples (called in Italy "*bella libertà*") goes on all day long.

Now, all this might soon be put an end to, if we English, who are so fond of travelling in the body, would also travel a little in soul. We think it a great triumph to get our packages and our persons carried at a fast pace, but we never take the slightest trouble to put any pace into our perceptions; we stay

usually at home in thought, or if we ever mentally see the world, it is at the old stage-coach or waggon rate. Do but consider what an odd sight it would be, if it were only quite clear to you how things are really going on—how, here in England, we are making enormous and expensive efforts to produce new art of all kinds, knowing and confessing all the while that the greater part of it is bad, but struggling still to produce new patterns of wall-papers, and new shapes of tea-pots, and new pictures, and statues, and architecture; and pluming and cackling if ever a tea-pot or a picture has the least good in it;—all the while taking no thought whatever of the best possible pictures, and statues, and wall-patterns already in existence, which require nothing but to be taken common care of, and kept from damp and dust: but we let the walls fall that Giotto patterned, and the canvasses rot that Tintoret painted, and the architecture be dashed to pieces that St. Louis built, while we are furnishing our drawing-rooms with prize upholstery, and writing accounts of our handsome warehouses to the country papers. Don't think I use my words vaguely or generally: I speak of literal facts. Giotto's frescos at Assisi are perishing at this moment for want of decent care; Tintoret's pictures in San Sebastian at Venice, are at this instant rotting piecemeal into grey rags; St. Louis's Chapel, at Carcassonne, is at this moment lying in shattered fragments in the market-place. And here we are all cawing and crowing, poor little half-fledged daws as we are, about the pretty sticks and wool in our own nests. There's hardly a day passes, when I

am at home, but I get a letter from some well-meaning country clergyman, deeply anxious about the state of his parish church, and breaking his heart to get money together that he may hold up some wretched remnant of Tudor tracery, with one niche in the corner and no statue—when all the while the mightiest piles of religious architecture and sculpture that ever the world saw are being blasted and withered away, without one glance of pity or regret. The country clergyman does not care for *them*—he has a sea-sick imagination that cannot cross Channel. What is it to him, if the angels of Assisi fade from its vaults, or the queens and kings of Chartres fall from their pedestals? They are not in his parish.

"What!" you will say, "are we not to produce any new art, nor take care of our parish churches?" No, certainly not, until you have taken proper care of the art you have got already, and of the best churches out of the parish. Your first and proper standing is not as churchwardens and parish overseers in an English county, but as members of the great Christian community of Europe. And as members of that community (in which alone, observe, pure and precious ancient art exists, for there is none in America, none in Asia, none in Africa), you conduct yourselves precisely as a manufacturer would, who attended to his looms, but left his warehouse without a roof. The rain floods your warehouse, the rats frolic in it, the spiders spin in it, the choughs build in it, the wall-plague frets and festers in it, and still you keep weave, weave, weaving at your wretched webs, and thinking you are

growing rich, while more is gnawed out of your warehouse in an hour than you can weave in a twelvemonth.

Even this similitude is not absurd enough to set us rightly forth. The weaver would, or might, at least, hope that his new woof was as stout as the old ones, and that, therefore, in spite of rain and ravage, he would have something to wrap himself in when he needed it. But *our* webs rot as we spin. The very fact that we despise the great art of the past shows that we cannot produce great art now. If we could do it, we should love it when we saw it done—if we really cared for it, we should recognise it and keep it; but we don't care for it. It is not art that we want; it is amusement, gratification of pride, present gain—anything in the world but art: let it rot, we shall always have enough to talk about and hang over our sideboards.

You will (I hope) finally ask me what is the outcome of all this, practicable, to-morrow morning by us who are sitting here? These are the main practical outcomes of it: In the first place, don't grumble when you hear of a new picture being bought by Government at a large price. There are many pictures in Europe now in danger of destruction which are, in the true sense of the word, priceless; the proper price is simply that which it is necessary to give to get and to save them. If you can get them for fifty pounds, do; if not for less than a hundred, do; if not for less than five thousand, do; if not for less than twenty thousand, do; never mind being imposed upon: there is nothing disgraceful in being imposed upon; the only disgrace is in imposing; and

you can't in general get anything much worth having, in the way of Continental art, but it must be with the help or connivance of numbers of people who, indeed, ought to have nothing to do with the matter, but who practically have, and always will have, everything to do with it; and if you don't choose to submit to be cheated by them out of a ducat here and a zecchin there, you will be cheated by them out of your picture; and whether you are most imposed upon in losing that, or the zecchins, I think I may leave you to judge; though I know there are many political economists, who would rather leave a bag of gold on a garret-table, than give a porter sixpence extra to carry it downstairs.

That, then, is the first practical outcome of the matter. Never grumble, but be glad when you hear of a new picture being bought at a large price. In the long run, the dearest pictures are always the best bargains; and, I repeat (for else you might think I said it in mere hurry of talk, and not deliberately), there are some pictures which are without price. You should stand, nationally, at the edge of Dover cliffs—Shakespeare's—and wave blank cheques in the eyes of the nations on the other side of the sea, freely offered, for such and such canvasses of theirs.

Then the next practical outcome of it is: Never buy a copy of a picture, under any circumstances whatever. All copies are bad; because no painter who is worth a straw ever *will* copy. He will make a study of a picture he likes, for his own use, in his own way; but he won't and can't copy; whenever you buy a copy, you buy so much misunderstanding of the original, and

encourage a dull person in following a business he is not fit for, besides increasing ultimately chances of mistake and imposture, and farthering, as directly as money *can* farther, the cause of ignorance in all directions. You may, in fact, consider yourself as having purchased a certain quantity of mistakes; and, according to your power, being engaged in disseminating them.

I do not mean, however, that copies should never be made. A certain number of dull persons should always be employed by a Government in making the most accurate copies possible of all good pictures; these copies, though artistically valueless, would be historically and documentarily valuable, in the event of the destruction of the original picture. The studies also made by great artists for their own use, should be sought after with the greatest eagerness; they are often to be bought cheap; and in connection with the mechanical copies, would become very precious: tracings from frescos and other large works are also of great value; for though a tracing is liable to just as many mistakes as a copy, the mistakes in a tracing are of one kind only, which may be allowed for, but the mistakes of a common copyist are of all conceivable kinds: finally, engravings, in so far as they convey certain facts about the pictures, without pretending adequately to represent or give an idea of the pictures, are often serviceable and valuable. I can't, of course, enter into details in these matters just now; only this main piece of advice I can safely give you—never to buy copies of pictures (for your private possession) which pretend to give a *facsimile* that shall be in any wise representative

of, or equal to, the original. Whenever you do so, you are only lowering your taste, and wasting your money. And if you are generous and wise, you will be ready rather to subscribe as much as you would have given for a copy of a great picture, towards its purchase, or the purchase of some other like it, by the nation. There ought to be a great National Society instituted for the purchase of pictures; presenting them to the various galleries in our great cities, and watching there over their safety: but in the meantime, you can always act safely and beneficially by merely allowing your artist friends to buy pictures for you, when they see good ones. Never buy for yourselves, nor go to the foreign dealers; but let any painter whom you know be entrusted, when he finds a neglected old picture in an old house, to try if he cannot get it for you; then, if you like it, keep it; if not, send it to the hammer, and you will find that you do not lose money on pictures so purchased.

And the third and chief practical outcome of the matter is this general one: Wherever you go, whatever you do, act more for *preservation* and less for *production*. I assure you, the world is, generally speaking, in calamitous disorder, and just because you have managed to thrust some of the lumber aside, and get an available corner for yourselves, you think you should do nothing but sit spinning in it all day long—while, as householders and economists, your first thought and effort should be, to set things more square all about you. Try to set the ground floors in order, and get the rottenness out of your granaries. *Then* sit and spin,

but not till then.

IV. Distribution.—And now, lastly, we come to the fourth great head of our inquiry, the question of the wise distribution of the art we have gathered and preserved. It must be evident to us, at a moment's thought, that the way in which works of art are on the whole most useful to the nation to which they belong, must be by their collection in public galleries, supposing those galleries properly managed. But there is one disadvantage attached necessarily to gallery exhibition, namely, the extent of mischief which may be done by one foolish curator. As long as the pictures which form the national wealth are disposed in private collections, the chance is always that the people who buy them will be just the people who are fond of them; and that the sense of exchangeable value in the commodity they possess, will induce them, even if they do not esteem it themselves, to take such care of it as will preserve its value undiminished. At all events, so long as works of art are scattered through the nation, no universal destruction of them is possible; a certain average only are lost by accidents from time to time. But when they are once collected in a large public gallery, if the appointment of curator becomes in any way a matter of formality, or the post is so lucrative as to be disputed by place-hunters, let but one foolish or careless person get possession of it, and perhaps you may have all your fine pictures repainted, and the national property destroyed, in a month. That is actually the case at this moment, in several great foreign galleries. They are the places

of execution of pictures: over their doors you only want the Dantesque inscription, "Lasciate ogni speranza, voi che entrate."

Supposing, however, this danger properly guarded against, as it would be always by a nation which either knew the value, or understood the meaning, of painting,¹³ arrangement in a public gallery is the safest, as well as the most serviceable, method of exhibiting pictures; and it is the only mode in which their historical value can be brought out, and their historical meaning made clear. But great good is also to be done by encouraging the private possession of pictures; partly as a means of study (much more being always discovered in any work of art by a person who has it perpetually near him than by one who only sees it from time to time), and also as a means of refining the habits and touching the hearts of the masses of the nation in their domestic life.

For these last purposes the most serviceable art is the living art of the time; the particular tastes of the people will be best met, and their particular ignorances best corrected, by painters labouring in the midst of them, more or less guided to the knowledge of what is wanted by the degree of sympathy with which their work is received. So then, generally, it should be the object of government, and of all patrons of art, to collect, as far as may be, the works of dead masters in public galleries, arranging them so as to illustrate the history of nations, and the

¹³ It would be a great point gained towards the preservation of pictures if it were made a rule that at every operation they underwent, the exact spots in which they have been re-painted should be recorded in writing.

progress and influence of their arts; and to encourage the private possession of the works of *living* masters. And the first and best way in which to encourage such private possession is, of course, to keep down the prices of them as far as you can.

I hope there are not a great many painters in the room; if there are, I entreat their patience for the next quarter of an hour: if they will bear with me for so long, I hope they will not, finally, be offended by what I am going to say.

I repeat, trusting to their indulgence in the interim, that the first object of our national economy, as respects the distribution of modern art, should be steadily and rationally to limit its prices, since by doing so, you will produce two effects; you will make the painters produce more pictures, two or three instead of one, if they wish to make money; and you will, by bringing good pictures within the reach of people of moderate income, excite the general interest of the nation in them, increase a thousandfold the demand for the commodity, and therefore its wholesome and natural production.

I know how many objections must arise in your minds at this moment to what I say; but you must be aware that it is not possible for me in an hour to explain all the moral and commercial bearings of such a principle as this. Only, believe me, I do not speak lightly; I think I have considered all the objections which could be rationally brought forward, though I have time at present only to glance at the main one, namely, the idea that the high prices paid for modern pictures are either

honourable, or serviceable, to the painter. So far from this being so, I believe one of the principal obstacles to the progress of modern art to be the high prices given for good modern pictures. For observe, first, the action of this high remuneration on the artist's mind. If he "gets on," as it is called, catches the eye of the public, and especially of the public of the upper classes, there is hardly any limit to the fortune he may acquire; so that, in his early years, his mind is naturally led to dwell on this worldly and wealthy eminence as the main thing to be reached by his art; if he finds that he is not gradually rising towards it, he thinks there is something wrong in his work; or, if he is too proud to think that, still the bribe of wealth and honour warps him from his honest labour into efforts to attract attention; and he gradually loses both his power of mind and his rectitude of purpose. This, according to the degree of avarice or ambition which exists in any painter's mind, is the necessary influence upon him of the hope of great wealth and reputation. But the harm is still greater, in so far as the possibility of attaining fortune of this kind tempts people continually to become painters who have no real gift for the work; and on whom these motives of mere worldly interest have exclusive influence;—men who torment and abuse the patient workers, eclipse or thrust aside all delicate and good pictures by their own gaudy and coarse ones, corrupt the taste of the public, and do the greatest amount of mischief to the schools of art in their day which it is possible for their capacities to effect; and it is quite wonderful how much mischief may be done even by

small capacity. If you could by any means succeed in keeping the prices of pictures down, you would throw all these disturbers out of the way at once.

You may perhaps think that this severe treatment would do more harm than good, by withdrawing the wholesome element of emulation, and giving no stimulus to exertion; but I am sorry to say that artists will always be sufficiently jealous of one another, whether you pay them large or low prices; and as for stimulus to exertion, believe me, no good work in this world was ever done for money, nor while the slightest thought of money affected the painter's mind. Whatever idea of pecuniary value enters into his thoughts as he works, will, in proportion to the distinctness of its presence, shorten his power. A real painter will work for you exquisitely, if you give him, as I told you a little while ago, bread and water and salt; and a bad painter will work badly and hastily, though you give him a palace to live in, and a principedom to live upon. Turner got, in his earlier years, half-a-crown a day and his supper (not bad pay, neither); and he learned to paint upon that. And I believe that there is no chance of art's truly flourishing in any country, until you make it a simple and plain business, providing its masters with an easy competence, but rarely with anything more. And I say this, not because I despise the great painter, but because I honour him; and I should no more think of adding to his respectability or happiness by giving him riches, than, if Shakespeare or Milton were alive, I should think we added to *their* respectability, or were likely to get better work

from them, by making them millionaires.

But, observe, it is not only the painter himself whom you injure, by giving him too high prices; you injure all the inferior painters of the day. If they are modest, they will be discouraged and depressed by the feeling that their doings are worth so little, comparatively, in your eyes;—if proud, all their worst passions will be aroused, and the insult or opprobrium which they will try to cast on their successful rival will not only afflict and wound him, but at last sour and harden him: he cannot pass through such a trial without grievous harm.

That, then, is the effect you produce on the painter of mark, and on the inferior ones of his own standing. But you do worse than this; you deprive yourselves, by what you give for the fashionable picture, of the power of helping the younger men who are coming forward. Be it admitted, for argument's sake if you are not convinced by what I have said, that you do no harm to the great man by paying him well; yet certainly you do him no special good. His reputation is established, and his fortune made; he does not care whether you buy or not: he thinks he is rather doing you a favour than otherwise by letting you have one of his pictures at all. All the good you do him is to help him to buy a new pair of carriage horses; whereas, with that same sum which thus you cast away, you might have relieved the hearts and preserved the health of twenty young painters; and if among those twenty, you but chanced on one in whom a true latent power had been hindered by his poverty, just consider

what a far-branching, far-embracing good you have wrought with that lucky expenditure of yours. I say, "Consider it" in vain; you cannot consider it, for you cannot conceive the sickness of heart with which a young painter of deep feeling toils through his first obscurity;—his sense of the strong voice within him, which you will not hear;—his vain, fond, wondering witness to the things you will not see;—his far away perception of things that he could accomplish if he had but peace, and time, all unapproachable and vanishing from him, because no one will leave him peace or grant him time: all his friends falling back from him; those whom he would most reverently obey rebuking and paralysing him; and last and worst of all, those who believe in him the most faithfully suffering by him the most bitterly;—the wife's eyes, in their sweet ambition, shining brighter as the cheek wastes away; and the little lips at his side parched and pale, which one day, he knows, though he may never see it, will quiver so proudly when they name his name, calling him "our father." You deprive yourselves, by your large expenditure for pictures of mark, of the power of relieving and redeeming *this* distress; you injure the painter whom you pay so largely;—and what, after all, have you done for yourselves, or got for yourselves? It does not in the least follow that the hurried work of a fashionable painter will contain more for your money than the quiet work of some unknown man. In all probability, you will find, if you rashly purchase what is popular at a high price, that you have got one picture you don't care for, for a sum which would have bought twenty you would have delighted in.

For remember always that the price of a picture by a living artist, never represents, never *can* represent, the quantity of labour or value in it. Its price represents, for the most part, the degree of desire which the rich people of the country have to possess it. Once get the wealthy classes to imagine that the possession of pictures by a given artist adds to their "gentility," and there is no price which his work may not immediately reach, and for years maintain; and in buying at that price, you are not getting value for your money, but merely disputing for victory in a contest of ostentation. And it is hardly possible to spend your money in a worse or more wasteful way; for though you may not be doing it for ostentation yourself, you are, by your pertinacity, nourishing the ostentation of others; you meet them in their game of wealth, and continue it for them; if they had not found an opposite player, the game would have been done; for a proud man can find no enjoyment in possessing himself of what nobody disputes with him. So that by every farthing you give for a picture beyond its fair price—that is to say, the price which will pay the painter for his time—you are not only cheating yourself and buying vanity, but you are stimulating the vanity of others; paying literally, for the cultivation of pride. You may consider every pound that you spend above the just price of a work of art, as an investment in a cargo of mental quick-lime or guano, which, being laid on the fields of human nature, is to grow a harvest of pride. You are in fact ploughing and harrowing, in a most valuable part of your land, in order to reap the whirlwind; you are setting your hand

stoutly to Job's agriculture, "Let thistles grow instead of wheat, and cockle instead of barley."

Well, but you will say, there is one advantage in high prices, which more than counterbalances all this mischief, namely, that by great reward we both urge and enable a painter to produce rather one perfect picture than many inferior ones: and one perfect picture (so you tell us, and we believe it) is worth a great number of inferior ones.

It is so; but you cannot get it by paying for it. A great work is only done when the painter gets into the humour for it, likes his subject, and determines to paint it as well as he can, whether he is paid for it or not; but bad work, and generally the worst sort of bad work, is done when he is trying to produce a showy picture, or one that shall appear to have as much labour in it as shall be worth a high price.¹⁴

There is however, another point, and a still more important

¹⁴ When this lecture was delivered, I gave here some data for approximate estimates of the average value of good modern pictures of different classes; but the subject is too complicated to be adequately treated in writing, without introducing more detail than the reader will have patience for. But I may state, roughly, that prices above a hundred guineas are in general extravagant for water-colours, and above five hundred for oils. An artist almost always does wrong who puts more work than these prices will remunerate him for into any single canvass—his talent would be better employed in painting two pictures than one so elaborate. The water-colour painters also are getting into the habit of making their drawings too large, and in a measure attaching their price rather to breadth and extent of touch than to thoughtful labour. Of course marked exceptions occur here and there, as in the case of John Lewis, whose drawings are wrought with unfailing precision throughout, whatever their scale. Hardly any price can be remunerative for such work.

one, bearing on this matter of purchase, than the keeping down of prices to a rational standard. And that is, that you pay your prices into the hands of living men, and do not pour them into coffins.

For observe that, as we arrange our payment of pictures at present, no artist's work is worth half its proper value while he is alive. The moment he dies, his pictures, if they are good, reach double their former value; but, that rise of price represents simply a profit made by the intelligent dealer or purchaser on his past purchases. So that the real facts of the matter are, that the British public, spending a certain sum annually in art, determines that, of every thousand it pays, only five hundred shall go to the painter, or shall be at all concerned in the production of art; and that the other five hundred shall be paid merely as a testimonial to the intelligent dealer, who knew what to buy. Now, testimonials are very pretty and proper things, within due limits; but testimonial to the amount of a hundred per cent. on the total expenditure is not good political economy. Do not therefore, in general, unless you see it to be necessary for its preservation, buy the picture of a dead artist. If you fear that it may be exposed to contempt or neglect, buy it; its price will then, probably, not be high: if you want to put it into a public gallery, buy it; you are sure, then, that you do not spend your money selfishly: or, if you loved the man's work while he was alive, and bought it then, buy it also now, if you can see no living work equal to it. But if you did not buy it while the man was living, never buy it after he is dead: you are

then doing no good to him, and you are doing some shame to yourself. Look around you for pictures that you really like, and in buying which you can help some genius yet unperished—that is the best atonement you can make to the one you have neglected—and give to the living and struggling painter at once wages, and testimonial.

So far, then, of the motives which should induce us to keep down the prices of modern art, and thus render it, as a private possession, attainable by greater numbers of people than at present. But we should strive to render it accessible to them in other ways also—chiefly by the permanent decoration of public buildings; and it is in this field that I think we may look for the profitable means of providing that constant employment for young painters of which we were speaking last evening.

The first and most important kind of public buildings which we are always sure to want, are schools: and I would ask you to consider very carefully, whether we may not wisely introduce some great changes in the way of school decoration. Hitherto, as far as I know, it has either been so difficult to give all the education we wanted to our lads, that we have been obliged to do it, if at all, with cheap furniture in bare walls; or else we have considered that cheap furniture and bare walls are a proper part of the means of education; and supposed that boys learned best when they sat on hard forms, and had nothing but blank plaster about and above them whereupon to employ their spare attention; also, that it was as well they should be accustomed to rough and

ugly conditions of things, partly by way of preparing them for the hardships of life, and partly that there might be the least possible damage done to floors and forms, in the event of their becoming, during the master's absence, the fields or instruments of battle. All this is so far well and necessary, as it relates to the training of country lads, and the first training of boys in general. But there certainly comes a period in the life of a well educated youth, in which one of the principal elements of his education is, or ought to be, to give him refinement of habits; and not only to teach him the strong exercises of which his frame is capable, but also to increase his bodily sensibility and refinement, and show him such small matters as the way of handling things properly, and treating them considerately. Not only so, but I believe the notion of fixing the attention by keeping the room empty, is a wholly mistaken one: I think it is just in the emptiest room that the mind wanders most; for it gets restless, like a bird, for want of a perch, and casts about for any possible means of getting out and away. And even if it be fixed, by an effort, on the business in hand, that business becomes itself repulsive, more than it need be, by the vileness of its associations; and many a study appears dull or painful to a boy when it is pursued on a blotted deal desk, under a wall with nothing on it but scratches and pegs, which would have been pursued pleasantly enough in a curtained corner of his father's library, or at the lattice window of his cottage. Nay, my own belief is, that the best study of all is the most beautiful; and that a quiet glade of forest, or the nook of a lake shore, are

worth all the schoolrooms in Christendom, when once you are past the multiplication table; but be that as it may, there is no question at all but that a time ought to come in the life of a well trained youth, when he can sit at a writing table without wanting to throw the inkstand at his neighbour; and when also he will feel more capable of certain efforts of mind with beautiful and refined forms about him than with ugly ones. When that time comes, he ought to be advanced into the decorated schools; and this advance ought to be one of the important and honourable epochs of his life.

I have not time, however, to insist on the mere serviceableness to our youth of refined architectural decoration, as such; for I want you to consider the probable influence of the particular kind of decoration which I wish you to get for them, namely, historical painting. You know we have hitherto been in the habit of conveying all our historical knowledge, such as it is, by the ear only, never by the eye; all our notions of things being ostensibly derived from verbal description, not from sight. Now, I have no doubt that, as we grow gradually wiser—and we are doing so every day—we shall discover at last that the eye is a nobler organ than the ear; and that through the eye we must, in reality, obtain, or put into form, nearly all the useful information we are to have about this world. Even as the matter stands, you will find that the knowledge which a boy is supposed to receive from verbal description is only available to him so far as in any underhand way he gets a sight of the thing you are talking about. I remember

well that, for many years of my life, the only notion I had of the look of a Greek knight was complicated between recollection of a small engraving in my pocket Pope's Homer, and reverent study of the Horse Guards. And though I believe that most boys collect their ideas from more varied sources, and arrange them more carefully than I did; still, whatever sources they seek must always be ocular: if they are clever boys, they will go and look at the Greek vases and sculptures in the British Museum, and at the weapons in our armouries—they will see what real armour is like in lustre, and what Greek armour was like in form, and so put a fairly true image together, but still not, in ordinary cases, a very living or interesting one. Now, the use of your decorative painting would be, in myriads of ways, to animate their history for them, and to put the living aspect of past things before their eyes as faithfully as intelligent invention can; so that the master shall have nothing to do but once to point to the schoolroom walls, and for ever afterwards the meaning of any word would be fixed in a boy's mind in the best possible way. Is it a question of classical dress—what a tunic was like, or a chlamys, or a peplus? At this day, you have to point to some vile woodcut, in the middle of a dictionary page, representing the thing hung upon a stick, but then, you would point to a hundred figures, wearing the actual dress, in its fiery colours, in all actions of various stateliness or strength; you would understand at once how it fell round the people's limbs as they stood, how it drifted from their shoulders as they went, how it veiled their faces as they

wept, how it covered their heads in the day of battle. *Now*, if you want to see what a weapon is like, you refer, in like manner, to a numbered page, in which there are spear-heads in rows, and sword-hilts in symmetrical groups; and gradually the boy gets a dim mathematical notion how one scymitar is hooked to the right and another to the left, and one javelin has a knob to it and another none: while one glance at your good picture would show him,—and the first rainy afternoon in the schoolroom would for ever fix in his mind,—the look of the sword and spear as they fell or flew; and how they pierced, or bent, or shattered—how men wielded them, and how men died by them. But far more than all this, is it a question not of clothes or weapons, but of men? how can we sufficiently estimate the effect on the mind of a noble youth, at the time when the world opens to him, of having faithful and touching representations put before him of the acts and presences of great men—how many a resolution, which would alter and exalt the whole course of his after-life, might be formed, when in some dreamy twilight he met, through his own tears, the fixed eyes of those shadows of the great dead, unescapable and calm, piercing to his soul; or fancied that their lips moved in dread reproof or soundless exhortation. And if but for one out of many this were true—if yet, in a few, you could be sure that such influence had indeed changed their thoughts and destinies, and turned the eager and reckless youth, who would have cast away his energies on the race-horse or the gambling-table, to that noble life-race, that holy life-hazard, which should

win all glory to himself and all good to his country—would not that, to some purpose, be "political economy of art?"

And observe, there could be no monotony, no exhaustibleness, in the scenes required to be thus pourtrayed. Even if there were, and you wanted for every school in the kingdom, one death of Leonidas; one battle of Marathon; one death of Cleobis and Bito; there need not therefore be more monotony in your art than there was in the repetition of a given cycle of subjects by the religious painters of Italy. But we ought not to admit a cycle at all. For though we had as many great schools as we have great cities (one day I hope we *shall* have), centuries of painting would not exhaust, in all the number of them, the noble and pathetic subjects which might be chosen from the history of even one noble nation. But, besides this, you will not, in a little while, limit your youths' studies to so narrow fields as you do now. There will come a time—I am sure of it—when it will be found that the same practical results, both in mental discipline, and in political philosophy, are to be attained by the accurate study of mediæval and modern as of ancient history; and that the facts of mediæval and modern history are, on the whole, the most important to us. And among these noble groups of constellated schools which I foresee arising in our England, I foresee also that there will be divided fields of thought; and that while each will give its scholars a great general idea of the world's history, such as all men should possess—each will also take upon itself, as its own special duty, the closer study of the course of events in some given place or

time. It will review the rest of history, but it will exhaust its own special field of it; and found its moral and political teaching on the most perfect possible analysis of the results of human conduct in one place, and at one epoch. And then, the galleries of that school will be painted with the historical scenes belonging to the age which it has chosen for its special study.

So far, then, of art as you may apply it to that great series of public buildings which you devote to the education of youth. The next large class of public buildings in which we should introduce it, is one which I think a few years more of national progress will render more serviceable to us than they have been lately. I mean, buildings for the meetings of guilds of trades.

And here, for the last time, I must again interrupt the course of our chief inquiry, in order to state one other principle of political economy, which is perfectly simple and indisputable; but which, nevertheless, we continually get into commercial embarrassments for want of understanding; and not only so, but suffer much hindrance in our commercial discoveries, because many of our business men do not practically admit it.

Supposing half a dozen or a dozen men were cast ashore from a wreck on an uninhabited island and left to their own resources, one of course, according to his capacity, would be set to one business and one to another; the strongest to dig and to cut wood, and to build huts for the rest: the most dexterous to make shoes out of bark and coats out of skins; the best educated to look for iron or lead in the rocks, and to plan the

channels for the irrigation of the fields. But though their labours were thus naturally severed, that small group of shipwrecked men would understand well enough that the speediest progress was to be made by helping each other,—not by opposing each other; and they would know that this help could only be properly given so long as they were frank and open in their relations, and the difficulties which each lay under properly explained to the rest. So that any appearance of secrecy or separateness in the actions of any of them would instantly, and justly, be looked upon with suspicion by the rest, as the sign of some selfish or foolish proceeding on the part of the individual. If, for instance, the scientific man were found to have gone out at night, unknown to the rest, to alter the sluices, the others would think, and in all probability rightly think, that he wanted to get the best supply of water to his own field; and if the shoemaker refused to show them where the bark grew which he made the sandals of, they would naturally think, and in all probability rightly think, that he didn't want them to see how much there was of it, and that he meant to ask from them more corn and potatoes in exchange for his sandals than the trouble of making them deserved. And thus, although each man would have a portion of time to himself in which he was allowed to do what he chose without let or inquiry,—so long as he was working in that particular business which he had undertaken for the common benefit, any secrecy on his part would be immediately supposed to mean mischief; and would require to be accounted for, or put an end to: and this all the more

because, whatever the work might be, certainly there would be difficulties about it which, when once they were well explained, might be more or less done away with by the help of the rest; so that assuredly every one of them would advance with his labour not only more happily, but more profitably and quickly, by having no secrets, and by frankly bestowing, and frankly receiving, such help as lay in his way to get or to give.

And, just as the best and richest result of wealth and happiness to the whole of them, would follow on their perseverance in such a system of frank communication and of helpful labour;—so precisely the worst and poorest result would be obtained by a system of secrecy and of enmity; and each man's happiness and wealth would assuredly be diminished in proportion to the degree in which jealousy and concealment became their social and economical principles. It would not, in the long run, bring good, but only evil, to the man of science, if, instead of telling openly where he had found good iron, he carefully concealed every new bed of it, that he might ask, in exchange for the rare ploughshare, more corn from the farmer, or in exchange for the rude needle, more labour from the sempstress: and it would not ultimately bring good, but only evil, to the farmers, if they sought to burn each other's cornstacks, that they might raise the value of their grain, or if the sempstresses tried to break each other's needles, that each might get all the stitching to herself.

Now, these laws of human action are precisely as authoritative in their application to the conduct of a million of men, as to that

of six or twelve. All enmity, jealousy, opposition, and secrecy are wholly, and in all circumstances, destructive in their nature—not productive; and all kindness, fellowship, and communicativeness are invariably productive in their operation,—not destructive; and the evil principles of opposition and exclusiveness are not rendered less fatal, but more fatal, by their acceptance among large masses of men; more fatal, I say, exactly in proportion as their influence is more secret. For though the opposition does always its own simple, necessary, direct quantity of harm, and withdraws always its own simple, necessary, measurable quantity of wealth from the sum possessed by the community, yet, in proportion to the size of the community, it does another and more refined mischief than this, by concealing its own fatality under aspects of mercantile complication and expediency, and giving rise to multitudes of false theories based on a mean belief in narrow and immediate appearances of good done here and there by things which have the universal and everlasting nature of evil. So that the time and powers of the nation are wasted, not only in wretched struggling against each other, but in vain complaints, and groundless discouragements, and empty investigations, and useless experiments in laws, and elections, and inventions; with hope always to pull wisdom through some new-shaped slit in a ballot-box, and to drag prosperity down out of the clouds along some new knot of electric wire; while all the while Wisdom stands calling at the corners of the streets, and the blessing of heaven waits ready to rain down upon us, deeper than

the rivers and broader than the dew, if only we will obey the first plain principles of humanity, and the first plain precepts of the skies; "Execute true judgment, and show mercy and compassion, every man to his brother; and let none of you imagine evil against his brother in your heart."¹⁵

Therefore, I believe most firmly, that as the laws of national prosperity get familiar to us, we shall more and more cast our toil into social and communicative systems; and that one of the first means of our doing so, will be the re-establishing guilds of every important trade in a vital, not formal, condition;—that there will be a great council or government house for the members of every

¹⁵ It would be well if, instead of preaching continually about the doctrine of faith and good works, our clergymen would simply explain to their people a little what good works mean. There is not a chapter in all the Book we profess to believe, more specially and directly written for England, than the second of Habakkuk, and I never in all my life heard one of its practical texts preached from. I suppose the clergymen are all afraid, and know that their flocks, while they will sit quite politely to hear syllogisms out of the epistle to the Romans, would get restive directly if they ever pressed a practical text home to them. But we should have no mercantile catastrophes, and no distressful pauperism, if we only read often, and took to heart, those plain words:—"Yea, also, because he is a proud man, neither keepeth at home, who enlargeth his desire as hell, and cannot be satisfied,—Shall not all these take up a parable against him, and a taunting proverb against him, and say, 'Woe to him that increaseth that which is not his: and to him that *ladeth himself with thick clay.*'" (What a glorious history, in one metaphor, of the life of a man greedy of fortune.) "Woe to him that coveteth an evil covetousness that he may set his nest on high. Woe to him that buildeth a town with blood, and stablisheth a city by iniquity. Behold, is it not of the Lord of Hosts that the people shall labour in the very fire, and the people shall weary themselves for very vanity." "The Americans, who have been sending out ships with sham bolt-heads on their timbers, and only half their bolts, may meditate on that "buildeth a town with blood."

trade, built in whatever town of the kingdom occupies itself principally in such trade, with minor council halls in other cities; and to each council-hall, officers attached, whose first business may be to examine into the circumstances of every operative, in that trade, who chooses to report himself to them when out of work, and to set him to work, if he is indeed able and willing, at a fixed rate of wages, determined at regular periods in the council-meetings; and whose next duty may be to bring reports before the council of all improvements made in the business, and means of its extension: not allowing private patents of any kind, but making all improvements available to every member of the guild, only allotting, after successful trial of them, a certain reward to the inventors.

For these, and many other such purposes, such halls will be again, I trust, fully established, and then, in the paintings and decorations of them, especial effort ought to be made to express the worthiness and honourableness of the trade for whose members they are founded. For I believe one of the worst symptoms of modern society to be, its notion of great inferiority, and ungentlemanliness, as necessarily belonging to the character of a tradesman. I believe tradesmen may be, ought to be—often are, more gentlemen than idle and useless people: and I believe that art may do noble work by recording in the hall of each trade, the services which men belonging to that trade have done for their country, both preserving the portraits, and recording the important incidents in the lives, of those who have made great

advances in commerce and civilization. I cannot follow out this subject, it branches too far, and in too many directions; besides, I have no doubt you will at once see and accept the truth of the main principle, and be able to think it out for yourselves. I would fain also have said something of what might be done, in the same manner, for almshouses and hospitals, and for what, as I shall try to explain in notes to this lecture, we may hope to see, some day, established with a different meaning in their name than that they now bear—workhouses; but I have detained you too long already, and cannot permit myself to trespass further on your patience except only to recapitulate, in closing, the simple principles respecting wealth which we have gathered during the course of our inquiry; principles which are nothing more than the literal and practical acceptance of the saying, which is in all good men's mouths; namely, that they are stewards or ministers of whatever talents are entrusted to them. Only, is it not a strange thing, that while we more or less accept the meaning of that saying, so long as it is considered metaphorical, we never accept its meaning in its own terms? You know the lesson is given us under the form of a story about money. Money was given to the servants to make use of: the unprofitable servant dug in the earth, and hid his Lord's money. Well, we, in our poetical and spiritual application of this, say, that of course money doesn't mean money, it means wit, it means intellect, it means influence in high quarters, it means everything in the world except itself. And do not you see what a pretty and pleasant come-off there

is for most of us, in this spiritual application? Of course, if we had wit, we would use it for the good of our fellow-creatures. But we haven't wit. Of course, if we had influence with the bishops, we would use it for the good of the Church; but we haven't any influence with the bishops. Of course, if we had political power, we would use it for the good of the nation; but we have no political power; we have no talents entrusted to *us* of any sort or kind. It is true we have a little money, but the parable can't possibly mean anything so vulgar as money; our money's our own.

I believe, if you think seriously of this matter, you will feel that the first and most literal application is just as necessary a one as any other—that the story does very specially mean what it says—plain money; and that the reason we don't at once believe it does so, is a sort of tacit idea that while thought, wit, and intellect, and all power of birth and position, are indeed *given* to us, and, therefore, to be laid out for the Giver,—our wealth has not been given to us; but we have worked for it, and have a right to spend it as we choose. I think you will find that is the real substance of our understanding in this matter. Beauty, we say, is given by God—it is a talent; strength is given by God—it is a talent; position is given by God—it is a talent; but money is proper wages for our day's work—it is not a talent, it is a due. We may justly spend it on ourselves, if we have worked for it.

And there would be some shadow of excuse for this, were it not that the very power of making the money is itself only

one of the applications of that intellect or strength which we confess to be talents. Why is one man richer than another? Because he is more industrious, more persevering, and more sagacious. Well, who made him more persevering or more sagacious than others? That power of endurance, that quickness of apprehension, that calmness of judgment, which enable him to seize the opportunities that others lose, and persist in the lines of conduct in which others fail—are these not talents?—are they not, in the present state of the world, among the most distinguished and influential of mental gifts? And is it not wonderful, that while we should be utterly ashamed to use a superiority of body, in order to thrust our weaker companions aside from some place of advantage, we unhesitatingly use our superiorities of mind to thrust them back from whatever good that strength of mind can attain? You would be indignant if you saw a strong man walk into a theatre or a lecture-room, and, calmly choosing the best place, take his feeble neighbour by the shoulder, and turn him out of it into the back seats, or the street. You would be equally indignant if you saw a stout fellow thrust himself up to a table where some hungry children were being fed, and reach his arm over their heads and take their bread from them. But you are not the least indignant if, when a man has stoutness of thought and swiftness of capacity, and, instead of being long-armed only, has the much greater gift of being long-headed—you think it perfectly just that he should use his intellect to take the bread out of the mouths of all the other men in the

town who are of the same trade with him; or use his breadth and sweep of sight to gather some branch of the commerce of the country into one great cobweb, of which he is himself to be the central spider, making every thread vibrate with the points of his claws, and commanding every avenue with the facets of his eyes. You see no injustice in this.

But there is injustice; and, let us trust, one of which honourable men will at no very distant period disdain to be guilty. In some degree, however, it is indeed not unjust; in some degree it is necessary and intended. It is assuredly just that idleness should be surpassed by energy; that the widest influence should be possessed by those who are best able to wield it; and that a wise man, at the end of his career, should be better off than a fool. But for that reason, is the fool to be wretched, utterly crushed down, and left in all the suffering which his conduct and capacity naturally inflict?—Not so. What do you suppose fools were made for? That you might tread upon them, and starve them, and get the better of them in every possible way? By no means. They were made that wise people might take care of them. That is the true and plain fact concerning the relations of every strong and wise man to the world about him. He has his strength given him, not that he may crush the weak, but that he may support and guide them. In his own household he is to be the guide and the support of his children; out of his household he is still to be the father, that is, the guide and support of the weak and the poor; not merely of the meritoriously weak and the

innocently poor, but of the guiltily and punishably poor; of the men who ought to have known better—of the poor who ought to be ashamed of themselves. It is nothing to give pension and cottage to the widow who has lost her son; it is nothing to give food and medicine to the workman who has broken his arm, or the decrepit woman wasting in sickness. But it is something to use your time and strength to war with the waywardness and thoughtlessness of mankind; to keep the erring workman in your service till you have made him an unerring one; and to direct your fellow-merchant to the opportunity which his dullness would have lost. This is much; but it is yet more, when you have fully achieved the superiority which is due to you, and acquired the wealth which is the fitting reward of your sagacity, if you solemnly accept the responsibility of it, as it is the helm and guide of labour far and near. For you who have it in your hands, are in reality the pilots of the power and effort of the State.¹⁶

¹⁶ See [note 7th, in Addenda \[p. 106\]](#).

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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