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AN
EXPLANATION

OF THE

CAUSE OF THE DISTRESS

WHICH PERVADES THE

Civilized Parts of the World,

AND OF

THE MEANS WHEREBY IT MAY BE REMOVED.

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EXPLANATION, &c.

SECTION I.

THE legitimate object of society is the improvement of the physical, moral, and intellectual character of man; and in the most convenient manner, to supply all his wants, in order that he may experience the least suffering and the greatest enjoyment.

Society, as it is now constituted, is not calculated to produce these results.

The physical, moral, and intellectual powers of the greater part of men are neglected, while their natural wants are supplied with little foresight or science; and in a manner most detrimental to the interests and well-being of all.

Hence it follows, that the great mass of mankind can scarcely obtain the common necessities of life by severe, and oftentimes unhealthy and disagreeable labour; while, comparatively, very few procure a superfluity of luxuries, which are, perhaps, still more injurious to them.

Under this system, the acquisition of *wealth*, and not *happiness*, is the chief aim of society. It is *therefore* a system founded on error, and all its results are, and must be, misery.

In consequence, those nations which are the farthest advanced in it, and which ought to be the most prosperous, are now overwhelmed with *poverty, distress, and crime*; from which they know not how to extricate themselves. Yet these nations superabound in all the means requisite to place their well-being and prosperity on a foundation, from which none of the known past occurrences of human affairs could remove them.

The wants of the world have been long supplied through a commerce founded on a *profit upon cost*;

price,—a minute division of labour,—and a competition of individual interests.

The various systems founded on these principles have been, perhaps, necessary and useful for a particular period of human affairs ; the overwhelming influence of scientific improvements, however, is now rapidly bringing that period to a termination. These systems cannot much longer proceed ; and profit upon price cannot henceforth be generally obtained.

The minute division of labour has materially deteriorated the human race, by dividing, and thereby weakening, their physical and mental powers ; and a competition of individual interests, by creating a general opposition of interests, now destroys the real interests of society, and of every individual of which it is composed.

In the rude ages of the world, before mechanical and other scientific inventions were known, the natural wants of men exceeded the productions of their industry ; for much labour was necessary even to create their ordinary food, clothing, and a few simple conveniences, and *it was then, if ever, that an excess of population existed.* But when, by mechanical and other inventions and improvements, the natural wants of men came to be more easily supplied, artificial wants were then excited, and a new era commenced. A commerce was established, founded *on a profit upon price*, and individual gain became the ruling passion throughout society.

A profit upon price for individual gain, and the accumulation of useless and unnecessary individual wealth, brought into action the lower passions of human nature ; a false estimate of all things ensued, and every thing became valued by its *cost*, instead of its *intrinsic worth*. Cunning and deception usurped the place of wisdom and sincerity ; and, in consequence, all parties whether successful or not in their pecuniary pursuits, have been grievously disappointed in the pursuit of happiness.

A minute division of labour, and a competition of individual interests, have been also found to degrade

the human character,—materially to weaken the social system,—and to involve society, in its most advanced stages, in every kind of difficulty.

The impossibility of proceeding further in this course is felt by every one ; and among all classes it is now perpetually asserted, “that something must be done, for the present arrangements of society cannot much longer continue.” The truth is, that a profit upon price can be obtained only, when *the demand is equal to; or exceeds the supply, while the real interest of society requires that the supply should, at all times, exceed the demand; and herein will be found the vast, the incalculable advantage of general and united interest over individual and conflicting interest; inasmuch as supply cannot be permitted advantageously to exceed demand under the system of individual and opposing interest.*

Fortunately, for society, in the present advanced state of science, injuriously as science is now directed, demand cannot exceed, or be equal to supply ; for a small number of men, with the aid of science *properly directed*, can easily produce far more than a large number can (advantageously for themselves) consume. The powers of production, aided by science, being almost unlimited.*

At the period when peace was last proclaimed, the new powers of supply which had been called into action by the previous extraordinary demand for the materials of war, were discovered to be far too abundant for the former peace arrangements of society, founded, as they were, on a profit upon price : and from that period, a profit on price upon the average of all British productions has not been obtained ; nor is it likely that a profit upon price can be again procured, except through some great public calamity.

For a commercial system, founded on profit upon price, can only be again successful through foreign or domestic war, pestilence, or famine.

* It has been ascertained, that the new powers of supply, in Great Britain, derived from science within the last forty years, exceeds the labour of 350 millions of adults.

Some measures are therefore absolutely necessary to relieve civilized society from the injurious effects now experienced by a system of commerce, founded on a profit upon price, and from the difficulties arising, under this system, from the excess of produce, generated by the new powers of supply, derived from science, which new powers of supply, however, *when properly directed*, will secure to the whole of society the highest permanent prosperity.

All parties agree in thinking that "something must be done," without perhaps having any definite notion of what that something must be. It is now evident, that that something, by whatever means it may be attained in practice, *must permit supply greatly to exceed demand, that there may be an evident excess of supply FOR ALL, without injury to the producers.*

Since the war ceased, production has greatly exceeded consumption, notwithstanding production has been exceedingly restricted in almost all civilized states. It is not, however, the interest of any portion of society that production should be restrained, until the wants of all shall have been fully supplied.

The existing arrangements of society permit production and consumption to proceed only through *profit upon price*, and it has been already shown that society has arrived at the period when profit upon price can no longer be generally obtained; for a profit upon price, to be successful, must always necessarily limit the supply *within* the demand.

Productions can be easily created to an unlimited extent, even to over-supply the wants of all, why then should not the wants of all be *now* over-supplied?—It is however impracticable to permit those who are now in want to supply themselves, *except through their own labour*, and also without the means being secured by which *there shall be at all times an excess of supply over consumption without injury to the producers.*

This appalling difficulty, in political economy, can be alone overcome in the present stage of society, by scientific arrangements, founded on foresight, pro-

duced by extensive experience, which shall permit the producers, advantageously for all ranks, not only to produce with facility, but also *to consume a larger portion than heretofore, of that which they produce.* This may now be done, and yet the producers shall create, for the higher ranks of society, a much larger surplus than they have ever yet received from the working classes. But it assuredly cannot be effected by a profit upon price, which the advanced state of society, and of the sciences will no longer permit; but it can, and must be effected *through arrangements which are to allow of unlimited productions, and encourage the unrestrained exchange of them,* the details of which are given in the writer's Report to the County of Lanark.*

SECT. II.

THE change, referred to in the preceding section, will be effected by arrangements that shall enable the parties engaged in them, to create produce either from the soil, or by manufactures, cheaper, and with more health and comfort to themselves, than can be done by any parties under the existing system; and the change will, most advantageously for society, *commence with those who are in the lowest rank.* The arrangements alluded to, are in consequence made for those who are now paupers, who subsist on the industry and wealth of others, and who are not only a burthen to all classes, but a fertile source of crime, and from whom much of the evil and misery of life proceed.

The first object intended to be attained by these arrangements, is to improve the character and condition of this class, and to improve their powers for the benefit of themselves and society.

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The proposed change may be made by means of competing for a short time with the existing commercial system, indeed no other mode of relieving society from its present difficulties appears practicable, and by these means the change becomes not only natural, but irresistible.

To accomplish the change in this manner it is necessary to create labour of a superior quality, and cheaper than can be now brought to market; for all cost resolves itself into labour, and it is evident that those arrangements which can produce the most skilful labour at the least expense, and at the same time support the labourer in the best health and most comfort, will, upon common commercial principles, put all other methods out of the market.

The inferior methods will be superseded by the superior, as human labour has been replaced by the steam engine,—as the single-thread spinning-wheel has been by Arkwright's superior mechanism,—and as the common hand printing-press is now being replaced by the new power machinery.

From these, and a thousand other instances, which might be easily adduced, of the extensive and rapid application of the sciences, (however ill directed,) to manufactures, commerce, agriculture, and the common purposes of life, a necessity has arisen for other corresponding changes among the working classes, in order to permit society *to benefit* by the scientific improvements which have been so extensively, but (from the want of proper arrangements in society) hitherto injuriously, introduced. The changes proposed for this purpose consist of new arrangements derived from science.

1st. To ERECT, HEAT, AND VENTILATE LODGING APARTMENTS for the working classes, *better and cheaper* than can be effected by any of the plans now in practice.

2nd. To FEED them *better and cheaper*.

3rd. To CLOTHE them *better and cheaper*.

4th. To TRAIN AND EDUCATE them *better and cheaper*.

5th. *To secure them BETTER HEALTH than they now enjoy.*

6th. *To APPLY THEIR LABOUR to Agriculture, Manufactures, and all the purposes of society, WITH SCIENCE BETTER DIRECTED than heretofore.*

And lastly, *To make them IN ALL RESPECTS better members of society.*

Every one must acknowledge that these will be important improvements, if they can be obtained.

It is now to be shown that they are easily attainable, and that all the means necessary to give them permanence now superabound.

The most difficult problem to solve was, "to ascertain what number of persons could be associated together, so as to give to each the most advantage with the least inconvenience."

The second, "to discover on what principle this new association could be formed, in order to avoid the evils which have hitherto kept society in a state of poverty, degradation, imbecility, and misery."

The third, "to find out, how all their wants could be perpetually and amply supplied without a collision of individual interests, and at the same time to secure a progressive improvement in all knowledge, so as to give a continued zest and enjoyment to human existence."

The arrangements best adapted for the improvement and happiness of the working classes, and which must, at the same time, render their labour superior to, and cheaper, than that of all other labourers are as follows :—

From about 500 to 1500 individuals, or (supposing four to a family) about 300 families are to reside in habitations in the country, on which much foresight and science has been exercised in devising their erection and combination, and in which an attempt has been made to unite, in these buildings, every domestic advantage and comfort of which the dwellings of the working classes are now susceptible.

They comprise spacious sitting and bed rooms, extensive public kitchen and eating rooms, schools for

different ages, church, places of worship for Dissenters, infirmary, library, lecture room, and inn for the accommodation of the friends and visitors of the inhabitants.

These buildings are to enclose an extensive playground for the younger children; space for gymnastic exercises for the elder children, and of recreation for adults.

They will be surrounded by gardens, which are to be chiefly cultivated by the females and elder children, and to be placed in the midst of about 600 acres of land; the arable part of which will be principally cultivated by the spade. The buildings have been accurately designed, working drawings for the builders are prepared, and every expense attending their erection has been estimated with great care, at the present cost of materials and labour in the city of Glasgow; being the nearest extensive market for these articles to the proposed establishment; and 10 per cent. on the whole has been added for contingencies.

The cost of these erections has been found to be about 34,260 0 0

To which add,

For furnishing the apartments, &c. of 300 families - 3,600 0 0

Fitting up school rooms and places of worship for

Dissenters	.	-	-	-	-	-	-	300	0	0
Ditto church	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	400	0	0
Ditto infirmary	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	200	0	0
Ditto lecture room	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	240	0	0
Ditto inn	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	500	0	0
Ditto library	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	500	0	0

Making the entire cost about - - - - £40,000 0 0

Forty thousand pounds, at seven and a half per cent. interest per annum, is 3000%.

The buildings, as before remarked, will accommodate, in a more commodious and comfortable manner, than any now in use, a population of 1200 persons; or (supposing four to each family) 300 families. By dividing the above-mentioned interest, 3000%, by 300, the number of families, will give 10% per ann. to be paid by each family of four persons, for the rent of the private furnished apartments, public buildings,

and other superior domestic accommodation ; and, by an accurate calculation made on the expenditure of the working class at New Lanark, whose population is well known to be sufficiently supplied, it is found that the average expenditure of each family does not exceed forty-five pounds per annum,* including rent and all expenses. This, for 300 families, will amount to 13,500*l.* per annum. Now, in a working population of 1200 individuals, there appears, from the most accurate data that can be obtained, an average of

			Which we call
248 individuals, male and female, under 10 yrs. of age.	— 1st class.		
178 ditto	ditto	from 10 to 15.	2nd ditto.
719 ditto	ditto	from 15 to 60.	3rd ditto.
55 ditto	ditto	60 and upwards.	4th ditto.

The labour of the children in the first class is not taken to account, although the occasional employment of those, from seven to ten, in weeding the gardens, and other light occupations, will be of value to the establishment. The labour of both sexes of the second class, consisting of

	<i>Per Annum.</i>
165 individuals at 4 <i>s.</i> per week, is - - -	1,716 0 0
680 ditto, of third class, at 10 <i>s.</i> ditto - -	17,680 0 0
40 ditto, of fourth class, at 5 <i>s.</i> ditto - -	520 0 0

Total expenditure taken at a high rate, includ-	19,916 0 0
ing rent and interest - - -	<u>£ 13,500 0 0</u>

Surplus - - -	<u>£ 6,416 0 0</u>
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In this calculation, the labour of eight of the second class, nineteen of the third class, five of the fourth class, total thirty-two, are not taken to account, as they would be employed in various domestic purposes and superintendence ; and also the labour of five of the second class, twenty of the third class, and ten of the fourth class, total thirty-five, are supposed to be

* The expenditure of the new establishment, will, in fact, be greatly diminished, even compared with that of New Lanark ; as the former is to be supplied with all the necessities of life by the labour of its own inhabitants ; and by this means, the various profits which are absorbed by the dealers in these articles, will be saved to the establishment, as well as a considerable sum in every part of the domestic arrangement.

at all times ineffective, either from indisposition or other causes.*

Thus, in return for their services, estimated at the common prices of manual labour, will these working classes obtain more substantial comforts than can be now procured by many of the middle classes, at an expenditure of several hundreds per annum.

The surplus of 5816*l.*, after it shall have repaid the capital expended in forming the establishment, will be an excess of wealth perpetually accumulating *to form new establishments as the population increases.*

SECT. III.

THUS may terminate the present commercial system of profit upon price; since by these simple, yet truly scientific arrangements, this profit will be rendered not only unnecessary and disadvantageous to all parties, but utterly impracticable.

From the preceding calculations it is evident, that *the inhabitants of these establishments will be in full possession, even at the commencement of their exertions, of far more substantial advantages than are now acquired by the favoured few, after a life of great exertion, and what is called success.*

It is evident that the members of these communities, *will be able, with facility, to create a considerable surplus beyond their own consumption*; this surplus produce they will exchange for the surplus produce of other similar communities, by estimating the value of such surplus produce *in labour, and not in money*, as at present.

By this arrangement they will receive all their external supply, and thereby render money, and all money transactions wholly unnecessary; their labour, for these arrangements, will require no other representative than notes or vouchers, to be given when the articles are delivered at the appointed depot; these notes or vouchers will designate the exact amount of

* These calculations are derived from a census of the population taken at New Lanark.

labour contained in such articles, which amount will be estimated upon equitable principles, ascertained and fixed by the communities.* Thus all bargaining, and *its degrading effects on the human character*, will be obviated.

But even this stage of society will be but temporary; for, by the most simple arrangements, which will be beneficial to all, supply may be made so far to exceed any possible demand, that it will be discovered, in a comparatively short time, that all may use whatever they desire, without the necessity existing for the intervention of any immediate equivalent.

The advantages of these new arrangements to the physical, moral, and intellectual character of the lower orders, are so great, that when they can be once fairly comprehended by the public, they will plainly show the extravagance, loss, and gross absurdity of the present occupation and expenditure of the working classes.

The *general* advantages of these new arrangements are (to state them in few words) that they clearly discover to us the only true solution of that, hitherto most difficult, problem in political economy, viz.—The *due distribution* of that immense amount of production which manufactures and agriculture, aided by machinery and other scientific improvements, can now create.

Under these arrangements, an abundant harvest and a liberal supply of all useful and agreeable commodities by machinery, will not produce, (as under the existing system,) distress and ruin,—on the contrary, these arrangements will effectually PREVENT the rising generation from being subject to poverty, or the *fear of poverty*—will preserve them from ignorance—from acquiring any bad habits or dispositions—from all cause of anger or malevolence towards their fellow-creatures, or from being in any degree intolerant to them, in consequence of any opinions, habits, or dispositions, which they may have been taught.

The *particular* advantages are, that they and their

* Their transactions with present society will, of course, be carried on by means of the usual circulating medium.

children, and their children's children, to the most remote posterity, will, to the end of their lives, exist amidst a superfluity of whatever can be necessary to their well-being and happiness ; until the whole surface of the habitable parts of the earth shall be cultivated like a garden ;—that they will be made active and intelligent ;—be trained to possess the most charitable, kind, and benevolent sentiments and dispositions ;—and that, through their example, all classes, sects, and parties, will be induced to adopt whatever experience shall prove to be beneficial, wise and good in these establishments.

It has been frequently asserted by theoretical political economists and others, that this system has a tendency to degrade and enslave the human race, and place it under unnatural restraints. No conclusion, however, can be more unfounded and fallacious, and it must proceed entirely from an ignorance of human nature and society. On the contrary, every part of this system has been purposely and carefully devised, after a calm and attentive consideration of ancient and modern history, and existing facts, with a view to impart to man the utmost freedom and independence of which he is susceptible, under a social system of order and happiness.

And it can never be too much impressed on the public mind, *that the only solid foundation of public liberty is to be found in the full supply of the wants—in the virtuous habits—in the intelligence, and consequent happiness of the whole population.*

The annexed Cut represents one of the proposed villages—the square will be as spacious as the largest square in London ; it will be surrounded with gardens, and the interior will be laid out in pleasure and play grounds.—The various parts of the buildings in the centre are fitted up for the purposes of schools, places of worship, library, lecture room, dining halls, and rooms for recreation—the four houses in the centre of the sides, are for the superintendants of the children, schoolmaster, surgeon, and public store.—One of the two buildings projecting from the corner of the square, is the inn for the accommodation of strangers, and the other building is the infirmary.—the manufactory, slaughter house, washing house, and farming offices, are placed at a short distance outside the square.



