

men, the labourers—poor despised drudges—off his Grace's estates, and his Grace is a pauper.

I advise you to get a pamphlet called "Society Classified: In reply to the question, 'How far is the saying true that every one lives either by working or begging, or by stealing?'" It is well worth your attention. The author is E. D. Girdlestone; the publisher is W. Reeves, 185, Fleet Street, London; the price, one penny.

CHAPTER IX.

THE SELF-MADE MAN.

The difference of natural talent in different men is, in reality, much less than we are aware of; and the very different genius which appears to distinguish men of different professions, when grown up to maturity, is not, upon many occasions, so much the cause as the effect of the division of labour. The difference between the most dissimilar characters—between a philosopher and a common street porter, for example—seems to arise not so much from nature, as from habit, custom, and education. When they came into the world, and for the first six or eight years of their existence, they were perhaps very much alike, and neither their parents nor playfellows could perceive any remarkable difference. About that age, or soon after, they came to be employed in very different occupations. The difference of talents comes then to be taken notice of, and widens by degrees, till at last the vanity of the philosopher is willing to acknowledge scarcely any resemblance.—*Adam Smith*.

Lycurgus fixed but a small value on a considerable quantity of his iron money, but on the contrary the worth of speech was to consist in a few plain words pregnant with a good deal of sense, and he contrived that by long silence they might learn to be sententious and acute in their replies. Upon the whole he taught his citizens to think nothing more disagreeable than to live for or by themselves. Like bees the people acted with one impulse for the public good, and always assembled about their prince. They were possessed with a thirst of honour, an enthusiasm bordering upon insanity, and had not a wish but for their country.—*Plutarch*.

The next thing we have to discover is, What is profit? Profit is the excess price received for an article over the price paid for it.

If a man sells a thing for more money than he buys it for the balance is profit.

You will see, then, that men may make profit either upon their own work or upon the work of others.

As a rule profit is not made by the producer of an article, but by some other person commonly called "the middleman" because he goes between the producer and the con-

sumer; that is to say he, the middleman, buys the article from the maker, and sells it to the user, at a profit.

In some cases, and to some extent, this profit is fair. For example, a costermonger buys fish in the market, carries it into the city and sells it at a profit. That profit is his wage, and pays him for his work as a distributor or carrier of goods from the producer to the user.

But when the middleman becomes a capitalist; when he buys fish on the Kentish beach by the ton and sells it at a profit to the shopkeeper and the coster, making for himself a couple of thousand a year, while the fisherman and the coster can hardly keep body and soul together, that is not a fair profit at all.

Why? Just look at it in this light. Here are four persons concerned in the fishery trade.

1. The fisherman, or getter.
2. The middleman, or dealer.
3. The coster, or carrier.
4. The consumer, or user.

Now, can you see any *reason* why of these four people the middleman, who does nothing but sign cheques, should fare so much better than any of the others?

We have three persons engaged in getting the fish from the sea to our doors. Is it fair that he who does the least work should have the most money? Is the work done by, or rather done *for*, the middleman so much more valuable to the public than the work of the fisherman and the coster?

My dear John, the middleman's work, so far from being the most valuable of the three, is actually worse than useless.

The middleman in fact does nothing but keep up the price of fish and keep down the rate of wages by his exorbitant profits.

Put the case to yourself thus. Suppose you were contractor, or caterer, for the supply of food to an entire town. Would you pay a man £2,000 a year for simply ordering other men to send telegrams to local agents to buy fish on the beach? I don't think you would. Being a hard-headed person, you would pay a clerk the current rate of wages to do all that, and so would save at least £1,800 a year. You

would see *then*, in a moment, that the middleman was a mere snatcher of profits, taking from the producer with one hand and from the consumer with the other.

All employers of labour, all rich men, except the money-lenders and the landlords, are middlemen.

They are all useless incumbrances, getting rich upon the labour of others.

There are three chief kinds of middlemen:—

1. The idle capitalist, who pays men to work for him, and pays managers to direct them, but never works himself.

2. The busy capitalist who pays men to work for him, and himself directs and manages the sale of what they make.

3. The capitalistic worker, or inventor, who has invented some new process or machine, and who employs other men to make or work the patent.

The first of these men is worse than useless. The second is, or might be, useful, but is almost always very much overpaid. The third is sometimes an evil, sometimes a good, ought always to be valuable to any nation, and is the *only* kind of capitalist with any pretence of a right to his riches. His case we must consider very carefully.

When I said in "The Pope's Socialism" that no man ever became rich by his own industry, the inventor was instanced against me by some of my readers.

They could not see that a man who made a fortune out of an invention did not grow rich by his own industry.

Yet the fact is very clear.

We will suppose that you, John Smith, of Oldham, invent a new kind of loom, which will do twice as much work as any other kind of loom now known.

You *patent* that loom, and for twenty-one years exact a royalty upon every such loom that is made. Thus you grow rich.

Do you grow rich by your own industry? By your own unaided industry?

Is all the machine your own invention? Does no other man's hand help you in the getting of your riches?

If you consider you will find that you owe your invention

to a legion of dead and nameless men; and your wealth to a legion of poor workers of your own time.

First. Your loom contains wheels, and shafts, and pinions, and is worked by steam. Did *you* invent the wheel? Did *you* discover steam? No. They were there ready to your hand, invented, like the hammer and the file you used, and the principles of mechanics by which you worked, by men long dead; by men without whose labours your wonderful invention had never been.

But, again, of what is your loom made? Of iron, of copper, of steel; of timber and many other materials. But you are not a miner, nor a puddler, nor a joiner, nor a smith or moulder.

So that to *invent* your machine you borrow from the dead; and to make it you must get the help of the living.

And when it is made. Will it fetch a fortune? Not at all. To make a fortune out of your machine you must make others, or get them made.

You cannot make them. If you did you would not grow rich, for it would take you years and years to make but a few.

Therefore you get other men to make them, other men to sell them, other men to work them, and get others to buy the cloth they weave, and *you* take the profit.

Do you call that getting rich by your own unaided industry? I don't. I call it taking a selfish advantage of your own good fortune and the necessity of your fellow creatures.

You will understand that I do not blame you. In a time of competition it behoves every man to look after himself. If I invented a machine I should take the royalty on the patent, and use it as best I might.

But it would be far better for me, and for the world, if I was not compelled to take it; but might give my talents freely to mankind without danger of being branded as a pauper, or left to die in a ditch as a reward.

You will often hear it said that Socialists are dishonest men, who wish to take the wealth of others and enjoy it themselves. John, that is a lie. It is a wilful, wicked lie, deliberately uttered by robbers who wish to hold fast to the spoil they have taken from the poor.

Socialism is terribly just, implacably honest. It is so honest that I doubt whether you can so much as look at the light of its honesty without blinking; although you are a fairly honest man, John Smith, as times go. But let me give you an idea of what I consider the very root principle of all Socialism, and of all Democracy.

This is the principle that there is no such thing as personal independence in human affairs. Man is a unit of society, and owes not only all that he possesses, but all that he is, to other men.

Yes. Just as no man can have a right to the land, because no man makes the land, so no man has a right to his self, because he did not make that self.

Men are made what they are by two forces, heredity and environment. That is to say, by "breed" and the conditions of life.

Take a new-born babe—a Shakespeare or a Stevenson—and put it down upon an uninhabited island and it will perish of hunger.

Set a savage to suckle it, and it will grow up a savage.

Your intellect and character are at birth what your forefathers made them. And the intellects and characters of your forefathers were what their forefathers and their own surroundings made them.

After birth, you become just what your circumstances and the people around you acting upon your peculiar character and intellect, may make you.

Born amongst sots and thieves, and reared amongst them, you will almost certainly become a sot and a thief.

Born and reared amongst Thugs you would have learned and grown to delight in murder.

Whatsoever you are, you are what your forefathers, your circumstances, and your companions have made you. You did not make yourself; therefore you have no right to yourself. You were made by other men; therefore to those other men you are indebted for all you have and for all you are, and Socialism, with its awful justice, tells you that *you must pay the debt.*

Allow me to illustrate this position by using myself as an example. I am a writer. I write a story, and I sell it to the public. Suppose I can, by the sale of many copies,

secure a large sum of money. Am I justified in calling that money mine; in asserting, as so many men do assert, that I have earned the money by my own industry and talent, and that therefore it belongs to me alone, by right? I don't know what you think, John Smith, but I *know* that I have not done that work without help, and that in justice I must pay back to *all* men what they have lent me.

What have they lent me? They have lent me all that I have and all that I am.

Who taught me to read, and to write? Who suckled me, nursed me, clothed me, fed me, cured me of my fevers and other ailings?

Where did I get my ideas, my thoughts, my power, such as it is, of literary arrangement, form and style?

I tell you frankly that I don't know. What do I owe to Solomon, to Shakespeare to Rabelais to Carlyle, to Dickens; to a hundred other writers? What do I owe to personal friends; to schoolmasters, to the people I have rubbed shoulders and touched hands with all these years? What do I owe to the workshop, to the army, to the people of the inns, the churches, the newspaper offices, the markets, and the slums? I don't know. I can only tell you that these people have made me what I am and have taught me all I know.

Nay, could I even write a story after all my learning and being and suffering, if I had not fellow creatures to write about? Could I have written "The Ramchunders" if I had not served with soldiers, or "My Sister," if there had been no unfortunate, desperate women in our streets?

All I know, all that even a great writer knows of art or human nature has been learned from other men. Now I tell you, Practical John, that I am in the *debt* of my instructors. Indeed you would see clearly enough that if Mr. Luke Fildes, the artist, engaged a man to sit as model for his "Casuals," he ought to pay that man his wages. And why should not Charles Dickens pay the models for his article on Tramps?

I owe a debt, then, to the living and the dead. You may say that I cannot pay the dead. But suppose the dead have left heirs! Likely enough they have left heirs.

And Socialism, with its awful justice, tells me that the claims of those heirs are binding on me.

Or there may be a *will*. Let us instance a case of this. To none, in my peculiar mental make up, am I more indebted than to Jesus Christ. Well, *he* left a will. His will expressly bids me treat all men as brothers. And to the extent of my indebtedness to Christ am I bound to pay all men, his heirs. And even after all these debts are considered, I, the author of a poor little tale, am still in the same position as the inventor of the loom, for I cannot so much as get a copy printed without the aid of myriads of living workmen and of dead inventors.

The pen I write with, the paper I write upon, the types, the press, the engine, the trains, the printer, the carrier, the shopman, even the poor little bare-footed newsboy in the streets, are all necessary to my "greatness," to my "fame," to my "wealth." And, after all, suppose no one would *buy* my book or read it! Who does buy it? Who reads it? Men and women I never saw. And who taught them to read? For to those teachers also I owe something.

Now, after all that, don't you think I should be a most ungrateful and conceited prig if I had the impudence to hold up my face and say "alone I did it"?

Here is a drawing. It represents a tree by a river. An apple has fallen from the tree and a monkey wishes to get the apple.



But he cannot reach it. Another monkey tries, but *he* cannot reach it. Then a third monkey comes and plucks the apple out of the water.



Now, if that third monkey who reached the water over the bodies, and by the aid of the other two, were to claim the whole of the apple as his! would you call that *fair*?

It is just as unfair as it is for an author or an inventor to claim fame and fortune as the just reward of "his own industry and talent." Think of these things. They may not strike you as "practical," but they are true.

CHAPTER X.

INDUSTRIAL COMPETITION.

Competition gluts our markets, enables the rich to take advantage of the necessities of the poor, makes each man snatch the bread out of his neighbour's mouth, converts a nation of brethren into a mass of hostile, isolated, units, and finally involves capitalists and labourers in one common ruin.—*Greg.*

Now, my friend, pull yourself together, and remember that you are a practical, hard-headed man. I want to ask you some questions.

Of a country where the idle men were rich, and the industrious men poor, where men were rewarded not for useful-