VARIOUS

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Содержание

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HOW TO DISARM THE CHARTISTS

The tempest which has lately passed over the moral world has begun to subside, – we no longer hear of empires revolutionised, monarchies overturned, by every post. The states which were to be prostrated by the blast have already fallen; those which have withstood the shock, like a cannon which has borne a double-shotted discharge, are only the more firm from having escaped uninjured from such a trial. France has been utterly revolutionised: Prussia, to all appearance, scarcely less thoroughly convulsed: Italy has been thrown into transports: the smaller states of Germany have, more or less, become republican: Austria has been violently shaken: the seeds of another bootless democratic convulsion sown in Poland. This is enough for three months. Even M. Ledru Rollin and Louis Blanc could scarcely, in their wildest imaginations, have figured a more rapid consummation of their wishes. But other states have stood firm. England, the firstborn of freedom, has shown herself worthy of her glorious inheritance: – she has repelled tyranny in the form of democracy, as she has repelled tyranny in the hands of kings. Russia is yet unshaken; – her people have responded to the call of the Czar, and are preparing on the Vistula for a crusade into western Europe. Belgium, contrary to all expectation, has withstood the tempter; the hordes sent down from Paris to carry desolation into its beautiful plains have been repelled with disgrace. Denmark has boldly thrown down the gauntlet to revolutionised and spoliating Prussia, and is striving to maintain its comparatively inconsiderable dominions against its gigantic aggressor; and even the rickety and half-revolutionised monarchy of Spain has survived the shock, and the streets of Madrid have witnessed the overthrow of a power which the arms of France proved unable to combat.

The worst, therefore, is over, considering the convulsion as one affecting the internal government and social concerns of nations. The wild-beast has made his spring: he has cruelly lacerated some of the party, but many have repelled his claws, and against others he has missed his blow. But, even more than that, we derive consolation from this reflection, that the force of the cosmopolitan and general transports has been weakened, and they are rapidly turning into their ordinary and comparatively regulated evils of war, conquest, and military devastation. The polyglot fervour, for the present at least, is stilled: the national are fast resuming the ascendency over the social passions. Prussia is at open war with Denmark, in the hope of wresting from it the German possessions of the Danish crown: Piedmont, Tuscany, and Lombardy are combating Austria on the Adige: Naples has declared war against Sicily, and Russia is only waiting till its gigantic strength is collected in Poland to crush the efforts of revolution in the Grand-duchy of Warsaw and Duchy of Posen. Thus revolution is leading every where to its natural and oft predicted result of universal hostility. The robbery of the weak by the strong, as in a nation where the authority of law is at an end, has become general. Spoliation is the order of the day. Nation is rising up against nation – people against people; civil war has already broken out in many parts of France – in others it is threatened: Paris is openly preparing for the conflict: and the reign of liberty, equality, and *fraternity* in France is, to all appearance, about to deluge the world with a stream of blood; second, perhaps, only to that which followed and punished the first revolution.

God forbid that we should speak lightly of the calamities which such general warfare must bring in its train. None know them better, or deplore them more deeply than ourselves. But they are light in comparison of the evils of successful revolution. War, even in its bloodiest form, is

under some control; it is conducted according to fixed usages, and by men subject to discipline. But revolutions have no customs: happily they have not been so frequent in history as to have induced any consuetudinary usage. They are subject to no discipline; the principle on which they proceed is the negation of all authority. They are preceded by the destruction of all those barriers which experience had erected, and found necessary to restrain vice's baneful influence. If they bear any resemblance to war, it is to the universal burst of passion which follows the storming of a fortress or sack of a city. The murder, rape, and conflagration which then invariably ensue, are but faint images of the wide-spread ruin which never fails to follow even the least bloody successful revolution. The evils of pillage, massacre, or storm affect only the immediate sufferers under the soldiers' violence: even the dread of plunder by a victorious host extends only as far as the arm of the marauder can reach. But the shock to credit, the destruction of capital, the wasting of industry by a successful revolution, are confined to no such limits; it devastates like a conflagration every thing within its reach, and spreads its baneful influence over the whole extent of the civilised world. There are few operatives in Britain who are not suffering at this moment under the effects of the French revolution. Who ever heard of a war which, in two months, destroyed *two-thirds* of the capital of a nation, and subjected thirty-four millions of men to the despotism of two hundred thousand armed janizaries in the capital, as the recent revolution has done in France?

Delivered by the firmness of our government, and the spirit of our people – by the wisdom which centuries of freedom has diffused, and the habits which wide-spread and long-continued prosperity have rendered general – from the immediate dangers of a similar convulsion, it well becomes us to take advantage of the breathing time thus afforded, to consider how we may lessen the danger in future times, and remove those causes which rendered it serious in the crisis through which we have passed. It is in vain to conceal that the danger was very great. For the first time for a hundred and sixty years, Revolution walked our streets; a large portion of our manufacturing population looked only for the telegraph from London on the 10th April to commence the work of insurrection. That such insane attempts would have been defeated is indeed certain; but what unutterable misery to the persons engaged in them, and the whole industrious population in the realm, awaited the successful issue of treason, even for a brief period, and in a single city? If Glasgow had been three days in the hands of the mob after the 6th March; if a portion even of London had remained in the possession of the Chartists on the night of the 10th April; if Dublin had become the theatre of a second rebellion on the 17th March, and Sackville Street had witnessed the throwing of rockets and storming of barricades, as Elbœuf and Rouen have lately done, who can estimate the shock which would have been given to industry, the ruin to capital, the destruction of employment, that must inevitably have ensued throughout the empire? It would not have been – as was said of the failure of the potatoes in Ireland – a famine of the thirteenth, with the population of the nineteenth century; it would have been the horrors of the Jacquerie, decimating the myriads of ancient Babylon.

The democratic party throughout the empire have a very simple remedy for the evils which we have suffered and those we have escaped. They say, "Extend the suffrage." It has already become evident that it is to this point that all their efforts will be directed, and in a way more likely in the end to be successful than by the coarse weapons, false declamation, and monster meetings of the Chartists. Already an "Extension of the Suffrage League" has been formed in Manchester with Mr Cobden at its head; and its ramifications and efforts may be seen in simultaneous meetings called on the subject in Glasgow, Birmingham, Liverpool, Leeds, and other manufacturing towns. There is the more reason to apprehend serious consequences from such a league from the habit which government, following Sir R. Peel's example, has got into of late years of yielding to any clamour soever, provided it is sufficiently loud and lasting. There is reason to fear, from some ominous hints that have been dropped in several influential Journals, particularly the *Times*, that it may be in the contemplation of government, by some concession in regard to the national representation, to allay, as they conceive, the discontent which has fostered Chartism in the manufacturing districts, and establish

the legislature in a way more adapted "to the spirit of the age, and the growing intelligence of the people." It becomes of the last importance, therefore, to consider what it is of which the Chartists and discontented operatives really complain; what are the evils which have rendered their discontent general and alarming on the present occasion; and what effect an extension of the suffrage would have on the actual, and, we fear, deep-rooted seats of evil, which at present disturb the tranquillity and interrupt the industry, and may, in the end, endanger the existence of the British empire.

The grand practical object of complaint, on the part of the working classes at present, is *want of employment*. This is so general, at least in the manufacturing districts, that it may be regarded as all but *universal* in those who depend on the chief branches of paid industry. Statistical facts of unquestionable accuracy demonstrate that this complaint is too well-founded, and in no situations more so than in the chief marts of our manufacturing industry. The weekly returns, made with so much accuracy by the police in Manchester, have exhibited an average, for the last six months, of about 9000 operatives out of employment, and 11,000 working at short time;[1] which, supposing there are only two persons on an average dependent on each, will imply above 27,000 persons out of employment, and 30,000 working short time. At Glasgow, matters are still worse. From inquiries made by the magistrates of that city, at the principal manufacturing establishments, with a view to furnish with information the deputation which was sent up to endeavour to procure some aid from government to restore credit and relieve the unemployed, it was ascertained that there are in that city above 11,000 persons out of employment, and 7000 working on short time, and 14,000 railway labourers on the railways connected with that city, who have been dismissed. Taking the ascertained and known unemployed at 25,000, and their dependents at 2 each, which is below the average of 2½, it is certain there are 75,000 unemployed persons in Glasgow and its vicinity. And if the unascertained poor, casual labourers, and Irish are taken into account, it is much within the mark to say, that there are A HUNDRED THOUSAND PERSONS IN GLASGOW AND ITS NEIGHBOURHOOD OUT OF EMPLOYMENT, besides at least twenty thousand working short time! So great and lamentable a prostration of industry is probably unparalleled in Great Britain.

What is in a peculiar manner worthy of observation in this deplorable prospect, is the *universality* of the depression. It is not confined to one branch of industry, or one employment; it spreads alike over all the *urban* population in the empire. Doubtless it is more severely felt in the manufacturing districts than elsewhere, from the entire dependence of industry in commercial localities on credit, and the fearful sensitiveness with which any shock to the monetary system is felt throughout the remotest ramifications of the mercantile world. But distress, more or less, in towns at least, is now universal. In Edinburgh the unemployed are increasing to such a degree, as to excite serious alarm in the better class of citizens. In Dublin, between general distress and repeal agitation, business is entirely at a stand; rents cannot be recovered, sales have ended; and the universal prostration resembles nothing known in recent times but the still more general and poignant distress which in Paris has followed the triumph of the revolutionists. London has suffered, as yet, much less than any other part of the empire from the general depression, because it is the seat of all the realised wealth and durable fortune of the empire: it is the place where money is spent, fully more than where it is made. But even in London, distress, wide-spread and serious, is beginning to be felt: the diminished expenditure of the West End is loudly complained of, and the incessant introduction of foreign manufactures is a standing subject of irritation to the operative classes. The revenue is collected slowly and with difficulty; and its diminished amount, showing a falling off of above two millions a-year, demonstrates that the permanent sources of our strength have at length come to be affected.

It is extremely remarkable, too – and to this point we in an especial manner request the attention of our readers – that the distress is felt *much more strongly in the commercial than the agricultural*

[1] In the week ending April 29, 1848, the workers in Manchester stood thus, —Times, May 4, 1848.

classes. Indeed, were it not for the increased weight of poor-rates, owing to the manufacturing distress, the multitude of railway labourers thrown idle by the stoppage of their lines, and the number of land-holders who have had their finances crippled by the universal fall of railway and other shares, it may be doubted whether there would now be any agricultural distress in the empire at all. Where it exists, it is entirely the reflexion or re-echo, as it were, of commercial ruin. This is the more remarkable, that the only serious and real disaster which has affected the country since the depression began, has been the failure of the potato crop in 1846, which of course blasted, in the first instance at least, the labours of the cultivators only; and that the distress now felt as so poignant has been continued only, not created, by the French and German revolutions. Down to February last, no class had suffered by real external calamity but the farmers: and yet the distress which has become so extreme, has arisen not among them, but among the merchants and manufacturers. This, too, has occurred at a time when a great change has been made for the interest, and at the desire, of the commercial classes, in our foreign mercantile policy, – when free trade has been introduced, to cheapen bread, lessen the cost of production, and facilitate exchanges; and when the ruin which was anticipated from the measure was not to the commercial but the landed interest. This is one of the most remarkable circumstances in our present condition, and one on which it most behoves both our legislators, and all interested in their country's welfare, to ponder.

While this deplorable prostration of the interests of industry in all its manufacturing branches has taken place, *no corresponding general decline in prices has occurred*. The producer has in too many cases been ruined, but the consumers have not as yet at least been benefited. In some branches of manufacture, indeed, a most frightful depreciation of value has taken place. Silks, muslins, and ladies' dresses are now selling for half of what they were a year and a half ago. But that is the effect of the French revolution, which has thrown such an immense quantity of articles of this description into the British market, and of the unparalleled number of failures amongst ourselves, which have forced such prodigious masses of stock, belonging to sequestered estates, to sale. These bankruptcies, and the ruinous contraction of the currency which has occasioned them, afford too satisfactory an explanation of the depressed prices in most of the staple articles of British manufacture. But in those articles which are not so dependent on the maintenance of commercial credit, and in which the good effects of free-trade might have been expected to appear, unmitigated by its attendant disasters, no diminution of price is perceptible.

The last harvest was so fine, that a public thanksgiving was offered for the blessing; and it came on the back of the importation of £31,000,000 worth of foreign grain, or above 12,000,000 quarters in the preceding fifteen months: but the price of wheat is still 51s. a quarter, and that of oats and barley yet higher in proportion. Oxen and sheep, as well as all kinds of provisions, have been imported to an enormous extent during last year;[2] so great, indeed, as to make the able writers in the *Times* apprehend that they had drained away the whole currency of the country in exchange; but butcher meat is still 7d. a pound. The West Indies are irrecoverably and finally ruined, but we are paying 5d. and 6d. a pound for our slave-grown Cuba and Brazil sugar. The *Banker's Circular* of May 2, 1848, asks whether there was ever heard of before a monetary crisis which "had *lasted a year*?" but no man, during that year of fine harvest, general peace, and universal suffering, has found that his household expenses have experienced the least diminution from what they were during the previous years of protected industry, wide-spread contentment, and unbroken prosperity. Free-trade is evidently driving some of the staple branches of British industry out of the field; one is expiring in the West Indies, another languishing in Manchester, a third tottering in Glasgow; and the diminution of home production keeping pace with the increase of foreign supply, prices remain what they were – domestic is superseded by foreign industry; and we shall have the satisfaction of finding that we have ruined many staple branches of our own manufacture without benefiting any class of our people.

[2] Imported from January 5 to October 10 — Parl. Paper, 12th Feb. 1848.

It must be evident to every rational observer that this extraordinary and universal depression must have been owing to some cause *within the control of the government of this country*, and that neither external calamities, nor the inclemencies of nature have had any material share in producing it. Within the short period of three years not only was there no deficiency of employment in any part of the empire, but labour bore a high, in general an extravagantly high price in every part of the empire. Sir R. Peel in an especial manner dwelt on this general flood of prosperity which had set in upon the country in spring 1845, and ascribed it, and the diminution of crime with which it was accompanied, to the measures for liberating commerce from fiscal restraint, which he had introduced on his first coming into power. Since that time no external disaster or warfare has arisen, till the French Revolution broke out in February last, to account for the stoppage of employment, or the general misery into which the lower classes have fallen. We were at peace with all the world: our exports in the year 1845 had reached the unprecedented amount, including the colonial productions, of £150,000,000;[3] and railways, penetrating the country in all directions, gave an extraordinary degree of employment to the working classes. In autumn 1846, it is true, Ireland and the West Highlands of Scotland were visited by a failure, amounting in many places to a total ruin, of the potato crop, which is said to have destroyed agricultural produce to the amount of £15,000,000 sterling. But though this great defalcation was the source of extreme distress to the cultivators who suffered by it, and to a certain degree diminished the general supplies of the empire, yet it could not be considered as the cause, by itself, of the wide-spread ruin which has since overtaken every interest in the empire. The agricultural productions of Great Britain are estimated by statistical writers at above £300,000,000 sterling annually, and the manufacturing and mining certainly exceed £200,000,000.[4] What is a failure of £15,000,000 of potatoes in such a mass? Such as it was, the gap was more than supplied by the importation, in a year after it occurred, of £31,000,000, or double the amount in value, of foreign grain. The harvest of 1847 was so fine that a solemn thanksgiving was, with the general approbation of the nation, offered to Almighty God for its blessings. Prices have since been not excessive, wheat being at an average about 51s. a quarter – yet still, in May 1848, we are in universal distress; and the want of employment is felt much more strongly by the manufacturing classes, who have been affected by no disaster whatever, than the agricultural, who have suffered one which has now passed away.

While these are the social evils which the working classes every where experience, and which have alone rendered the Chartist movement general or serious in the country, the great complaint, in a political point, which they every where make is, that the legislature and the government are alike indifferent to their representations; that they turn a deaf ear to their complaints, show themselves insensible, to their tales of woe, and refuse even to give that moderate relief to them which is easily within their power, which a paternal government is bound to extend to its distressed subjects, and which, in former days, under Tory administrations, was never withheld from the people, when suffering under dispensations not approaching to the present in duration or intensity. To give an idea of the feeling *now universal* in the commercial and manufacturing districts, we subjoin an extract from a journal conducted with much ability, the *Daily Mail* of Glasgow.

> "The household suffrage movement originates in a deep-seated conviction that the present legislature works ill. There are practical measures offered for its acceptance, which it rejects; and yet the feeling of the country is in their favour. Means of employing the idle are suggested; but by the government and by the parliament they are heedlessly neglected. Some crotchet in political economy is introduced into a plain matter of accounting; and meanwhile the people starve, because their sustenance, in the way proposed, is inconsistent with something that somebody has written in a book. There is an obvious insufficiency of food, of

[3] Porter's *Progress of the Nation*, 358, 2d Edition.

[4] Viz: —— Porter's *Progress of the Nation*, i. 177.

> employment, and of investment in the country, while land languishes for lack of tillage; and when the plain remedy for these great deficiencies is pressed, there arises the ghost of long-past folly, waving its parchment before the legislature, and so the living are starved, in strict accordance not with the meaning but with the mistake of the dead. Free-trade is proclaimed to be the rule of our political practice by the same men who enact and maintain laws to fetter and reduce the circulation of the country, which is the life of its trade. We hear of free-trade with foreign countries, in which duties equal to twenty, thirty, and forty per cent are charged upon our products, although the existence of freedom of trade under these circumstances is absolutely impossible.
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> "The nation holds colonies in all quarters of the world, purchased and maintained at a costly rate, embracing every characteristic of soil and climate on the earth, competent to provide homes and sustenance for nearly the whole population of the world; and the legislature voluntarily casts away all interest to be derived from their progress, except its cost. The national affairs are managed on some kind of rule altogether different from any thing that a prudent man would adopt in the guidance of his private business; and so employment becomes scarce, and food dear together; while the natural and necessary results are, popular irritation, and a desire for change, which have led to the associations for extending the suffrage, now general throughout the great cities of the empire." —*Glasgow Daily Mail*, May 2, 1848.

There is too much foundation, all must admit, for these complaints. On occasion of the dreadful monetary crisis of October 1847, when ministers were compelled to break through the Bank Charter Act, and nearly all railway labour and mercantile industry in the country was suspended from the impossibility of finding funds to carry them on, the government were besieged with the most earnest memorials from the chambers of commerce in nearly all the commercial cities of the empire, and especially London, Glasgow, Liverpool, Birmingham, and Edinburgh, pointing out the ruinous effects of the Bank Restriction Act of 1844; but still they did nothing. They contented themselves with appointing a committee, in which the bullionists were understood to have the majority, in parliament, which, after sitting long, and examining a host of witnesses, and burying the question under heaps of blue folios, will probably end by reporting a year hence in favour of the present system. The most vigorous remonstrances have been made by the same commercial bodies against the threatened abrogation of the Navigation Laws; but that has not in the slightest degree shaken the avowed determination of government, to carry the principle of free-trade without limitation into that vital branch of our national industry.

The West India interest demonstrated in a manner "*luce meridiana clarius*," that the equalisation of the duties of foreign slave-grown to home free-labour-raised sugar, would prove utter ruin to our West India colonies, and reinstate in frightful activity the infernal traffic of the slave-trade; but this did not produce the slightest impression on government, and they without hesitation consigned these noble colonies to destruction, and restored the slave-trade throughout the globe, rather than abate one iota of the dogmas of free-trade, or raise sugar a penny a-pound.[5] All the great cities of the empire have sent deputations or memorials to government, beseeching in the most earnest manner a grant of

[5] One of the oldest and wealthiest houses in Glasgow in the West India trade has just failed for £400,000, and in their circular announcing the suspension of their payments they observe: —"For upwards of half a century we have steadily followed our business of West India merchants, never engaging in speculations of any kind. Our assets chiefly consist of sugar estates in Trinidad and Demerara. These estates are in excellent condition, capable of making large crops; but they have been *rendered worse than unprofitable and of no value by acts of Parliament – the worst of which being the Sugar-duty Act of 1846*– whereby slave-made sugar was admitted to consumption in this country, on terms which the British colonies are altogether unprepared to compete with. We are, Sir, your most obedient Servants. Eccles, Burnley, & Co." This is the truth, and nothing but the truth, honestly and manfully spoken. These gentlemen have been as completely spoliated by Act of Parliament as were the estates of the French emigrants by the Convention.

exchequer bills, or the aid of treasury credit in some way, to set agoing the unfinished lines of railways, and enable them to find a certain amount of labour for the unemployed; but they have every where, met with a decided refusal. We must have free-trade in every thing, in pauperism, typhus fever, and insurrection, as well as in corn, cotton, or sugar. *Laissez faire* is the universal system: all government has to do is to hinder the competitors coming to blows. Every thing must find its level, though that level to one-half of the community is the bottom of the cellar. One thing only is to be protected, and that is gold; one class only is to be saved from competition, and that class is the great capitalists.

This obstinate resistance of government to the wishes, and declared insensibility to the wants and necessities of the country, is the more remarkable that it exhibits so striking a contrast to the paternal spirit by which government was formerly actuated. Suffering, never indeed approaching in extent and intensity to that which now afflicts the nation, but still sufficiently distressing, has been often experienced in former times; but on none of these did the government hesitate to come forward with a large grant, founded on the public credit, to alleviate the general calamity, and always with the very best effects. In 1793, in consequence of the breaking out of the war, and the general hoarding which took place in France during the terrors of the Revolution, a great export of gold from the British islands to the Continent took place; but Mr Pitt at once came forward with a grant of £5,000,000 to aid the commercial interest; and so rapidly did this well-timed advance restore credit, that a small part only of this large sum was taken up, and very little of it was lost to the nation. In February 1797, a similar cause produced that great run on the bank which brought that establishment to the verge of ruin; but the same minister instantly introduced the suspension of cash payments, which at once restored credit, revived industry, and carried the nation in a triumphant manner through all the dangers and crises of the war. In 1799 and 1800, two successive bad harvests brought the nation to the verge of starvation; but government interposed by various sumptuary laws regarding food, stopped distillation from grain, and themselves imported immense quantities of Indian corn for the use of the people. In 1811, a similar calamity ensued from the effects of Napoleon's continental blockade, and the American Non-intercourse Act; but government again interposed with an issue of exchequer bills, and confidence was restored, and with it industry and commerce revived.

In 1826 very great depression existed in all branches of industry, in consequence of the dreadful monetary crisis of December 1825; but government stopped the crash, as Lord Ashburton has told us, by issuing £2,000,000 of old and forgotten *notes* from the Bank of England, and then alleviated the distress by a copious issue of exchequer bills to aid the commercial interest, which soon brought the nation out of its difficulties. But since the government has been popularised by the revolution of 1832, nothing of the kind has been done. The long-protracted distress from 1838 to 1841, and the dreadful suffering of 1847-8, have been alike unable to extort for British suffering one farthing in aid of the national industry from the Chancellor of the Exchequer. The principle *laissez faire* has prevailed alike over the strongest claims of justice and the most piteous tales of suffering. Government seems resolved that the nation shall drain the lees of free-trade to the dregs, and taste it in all its bitterness. It is no consolation to suffering British industry to see that £10,000,000 was in one year voted to suffering Irish idleness, and £20,000,000 in another to the grand step in West Indian ruin. The people see that the first was yielded to terror, the last to fanaticism; and the melancholy conviction has forced itself on every mind that government now yield to nothing but the strongest pressure from without; and that the doors of the Treasury will be opened only to the fierce demand of threatened high treason, or the reverberated echoes of wide-spread delusion.

Ministers were aware of all this; and they knew also that, on the first declaration of war with France or any foreign power, they would at once raise a loan or issue exchequer bills to the extent of at least £20,000,000 sterling. Here is an enemy worse than the French, or the French and the Repealers united – want, fever, famine, disaffection, despair, actually within our bosom, and consuming the very vitals of the state! A word from the Chancellor of the Exchequer would at once arrest the misery, dispel the sedition, restore bread to millions, revive loyalty in a wasted

and perishing state.[6] Why, then, is it not instantly done? why does not government eagerly seize so glorious an opportunity of healing the wounds of the suffering people, and extinguishing, by deeds of beneficence, the demons of discord and disaffection in the realm? Because it would interfere with a *principle*; it would intercept the free employment of wealth; it might alarm capitalists, lower the value of Exchequer bills, and for a week or two depress the funds a-half, or perhaps one per cent. It would be a substantial *extension of the currency*, and that would imply an avowal that it had formerly been unduly contracted; it might be quoted against ministers as a tardy and reluctant admission of the error of their former monetary policy in the parliamentary committee, or in the House of Commons! It is for such wretched considerations as these that relief is refused, and want, wretchedness, and treason prolonged throughout the kingdom. Were the subject not so serious, and even terrible in all its bearings, their conduct would remind us of the well-known reasons assigned by Dr Sangrado to Gil Blas, for continuing, to the evident destruction of his patients, the system of hot water and bleeding.

"'Sir,' said I one evening to Dr Sangrado, 'I call heaven to witness, that I exactly follow out your method, nevertheless all my patients slip out of my hands to the other world: one would think they *take a pleasure in dying, to discredit our system*… If you would follow my advice,' replied I, 'we would change our system of practice.' 'I would willingly,' replied he, 'make the trial, if it led to no other consequences than those you have mentioned; but I have published a book in which I extol the frequent use of the lancet and hot water; *do you wish me to decry my own work?*' 'Oh! you are right,' replied I, 'you must *never think of giving such a triumph to your enemies: they would say you have at length confessed your error; that would ruin your reputation: perish rather the noblesse, the clergy, and the people*. Let us go on as we have begun.' We continued accordingly our system, and went on with such expedition, that in six weeks we had occasioned as many funerals as the siege of Troy."[7]

We speak advisedly, and after a full observation of its effects, when we say, that the great majority of the unhappy persons who, within the last year, have been sent into the Gazette, owe their ruin as completely and exclusively to the measures of government, as Dr Sangrado's patients did their death to the copious bleedings and warm water draughts which he prescribed to them. Only think what our rulers have done, and then say whether any save colossal private fortunes, engaged in mercantile adventures, could withstand the effects of their measures.

I. The government, in the first place, by the bill of 1819, compelled the Bank of England to pay its notes in gold; by the act of 1826 prohibited the issuing of any notes below five pounds; and by the act of 1844 in England, and 1845 in Scotland and Ireland, restricted the notes issuable on securities, in the whole empire, to £32,000,000, declaring that, for every note beyond that limit issued by any bank, sovereigns to an equal amount must be stored up in the vaults of the issuer. In a word, they made the whole circulation beyond £32,000,000 a metallic currency. At the same time, they provided that, for every five sovereigns beyond a certain limit withdrawn from the Bank of England, a five-pound note should be withdrawn by that establishment from the circulation.

II. Having thus laid the nation fast in golden fetters, and prevented the possibility of an extension of the currency, for carrying on all undertakings beyond this £32,000,000, save by an augmentation of the gold coin in the country, government next proceeded to give every possible encouragement to railway undertakings, and to pass bills through the legislature for new undertakings of that description, requiring the outlay from 1845 to 1848 of at least £150,000,000 sterling, *in addition* to the ordinary expenditure and operations of the country, already raised at that period to an unusual and unprecedented height.

III. Having thus, in 1844 and 1845, landed the empire in an extraordinary and unheard-of amount of undertakings, requiring the utmost possible extension of the currency to carry these on,

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[6] The inquest set on foot by the magistrates of Glasgow in support of their deputation, showed that six railway companies alone connected with that city could, if aided by government, employ *for a year* workmen as follows: —Embracing, with their dependants, at least 120,000 persons, besides mechanics and others indirectly benefited.

[7] *Gil Blas*, lib. 2, c. 5.

government, in 1846, next proceeded to introduce the free-trade system – allow the free importation of foreign grain, and throw down the protection barriers which had hitherto alone sheltered the native industry of the empire, and prevented, save on extraordinary emergencies, any considerable drain upon its metallic resources. They thus raised the imports to £85,000,000, sent the metallic circulation headlong out of the country, and of course contracted, by the force of the law of 1844, in a similar proportion, its paper circulation. By the two combined, they occasioned such a strain upon the bank that, in the end of October 1847, it was within a few days of stopping payment. Ministers were in consequence obliged to suspend the Bank Charter Act; but not till an amount of bankruptcy had been brought upon the middle class, and misery upon the people, unparalled in the history of Great Britain.

IV. Free-trade having exposed our colonists in the West Indies, who were charged with an indolent emancipated black population, to a direct competition with the slave colonies of other countries, where sugar, being raised by forced labour, could be brought to the market at little more than half the price which it cost in the British – government next obstinately adhered to their determination to ruin these colonies, and destroy capital to the amount of £100,000,000 sterling, rather than abate one iota of their free-trade principles; realising thus, indeed, the exclamation of Robespierre – "Perish the colonies, rather than one principle be abandoned!" The consequence is, that one half of the estates in the British West India islands will go out of cultivation, and be choked with jungle in the course of this year. Agricultural produce, once averaging £22,000,000 annually, will be destroyed in the next: a market once taking off £3,600,000 of our manufactures, and giving employment to 250,000 tons of our shipping, will be extinguished; and the foreign slave-colonies, having beat down British competition, will get the monopoly of the sugar-market of the world into their own hands, and raise its price to 7d. or 8d. a pound in the English market – thus terminating the miserable advantage for which all these disasters are incurred.

Whoever considers seriously, and in a dispassionate mode, the necessary effect of the measures on the part of government which have now been detailed, so far from being surprised at the extent of the devastation and ruin which has occurred simultaneously in Great Britain, Ireland, the East and West Indies, will only be surprised that it has not been greater and more wide-spread than it actually has been. He will regard it as the most decisive proof of the vast resources of the British empire, and the indomitable energy of the British people, that they have been able to bear up at all against such repeated and gratuitous blows, levelled, not intentionally, but from mistaken principles, by their own rulers at the main sources of national prosperity. And he will not consider it the least remarkable circumstance, in this age of wonders, that when the ruinous effects of these their own measures had been clearly and beyond all dispute demonstrated by experience, government not only positively refused to make the smallest abatement from, or change in their suicidal policy, but in every instance declined to give the slightest assistance to the persons ruined by, or suffering under it.

To us, reflecting on the causes to which this extraordinary and unprecedented conduct on the part of government is to be imputed, it appears that it can only be accounted for from two causes, to the combined operation of which the present distressed condition and recent danger of the British empire are entirely to be ascribed.

The first of these is the fatal and still undiminished influence of the *political economists* in the legislature. So great and disastrous has it been, that we do not hesitate to say, that we regard that sect as the worst enemies the empire ever had. What has made them so disastrous to the best interests of their country is, that they have introduced the custom of looking upon the science of government, not as a matter to be based upon experience, modified by its lessons, but as consisting of theories to be determined entirely by general reasonings, and considered to depend solely on the conclusions of philosophers, in works of abstract thought. They have thus come to disregard altogether the sufferings of nations or classes of society under their systems, and to adhere to them obstinately in the midst of general ruin and lamentation, as Dr Sangrado did to his bleedings and hot-water cure, though they had occasioned more funerals than the siege of Troy? They look upon a nation as the surgeon does upon

a patient who is held down on the marble table to undergo an operations. This was just the case with Turgot – one of the first and most eminent of the economists, and who began the French Revolution by introducing their doctrines into French legislation. "He regarded," says Senac de Meilhan, "the body corporate not as a living and sentient, but as a lifeless and insensible substance, and operated upon it with as little hesitation as an anatomist does on a dead body." Beyond all doubt it was the suffering produced by the contraction of the currency from 1826 to 1830 that brought about the storm of discontent which issued in the Reform Bill. And if the empire is to be further revolutionised, and the Chartist agitation is to end in household or five-pound suffrage, it will unquestionably be owing to the wide-spread misery which the combined operation of free-trade and a fettered currency have extended through the empire.

The second cause to which this strange insensibility of government to the evidence of facts, and the sufferings of the empire, is to be ascribed, is the influence in the legislature of that very class which was installed in power by the revolution of 1832. The movement in that year was essentially democratic – it was by the effort of the masses, joined to that of the middle classes and the Whig aristocracy, that the crown was overawed, and the change forced upon the country. But the change actually made was in the interest and for the benefit of one of these parties only. The shopkeepers, by the framing of the Reform Act, got the government into their own hands. By schedules A and B, the colonies and shipping interest were at once disfranchised; by the ten-pound clause, the majority of votes in the urban constituencies was vested in the shopkeepers; by the places enfranchised, two-thirds of the seats in the House of Commons were for towns and boroughs. Thus the majority, both of the seats and the constituents, was put into the hands of the trading classes. Thence all the changes which have since taken place in our national policy. The practised leaders of parliament soon discovered where power was now practically vested, – they are as quick at finding out that as courtiers are at finding out who are the favourites that influence the sovereign. Thence the free-trade measures, and the obstinate retention of a contracted currency. It is for the interest of capitalists to lower the price of every thing except money, and render it as dear as possible; it is for the interest of the retailer and merchant to buy cheap and sell dear. Thence the free-trade system and contracted currency, which have now spread such unheard-of devastation throughout the empire. When a *class* obtains the ascendency in government, it becomes wholly inexorable, and deaf to every consideration of justice or expedience urged by any other class. Of such class government may be said, what Thurlow, with his usual wit and sagacity, said to a suitor who was complaining of the denial of justice he had experienced from an incorporation, – "Justice, Sir! did you ever expect justice from an incorporation? which has no soul to be damned, and no body to be kicked."

It is no doubt true that a large proportion of the persons who have suffered under the system introduced into our colonies, have been the very commercial and manufacturing class who have imposed it upon government. The manufacturing operatives joined the shopkeepers in the cry for free-trade, – and where has it left numbers of them? – in the workhouse and the Gazette. But that is no uncommon thing in human affairs; perhaps the greatest evils which befall both nations and individuals are those which they bring upon themselves by their own folly or grasping disposition. Providence has a sure mode of punishing the selfishness of man, which is to let it work out its natural fruits. If the deserved retribution to selfish and interested conduct were to be taken out of human affairs, how much misery would be avoided here below, but what impunity would exist to crime!

The working classes in the manufacturing districts, who now see how entirely they have been deluded on this subject, and how completely free-trade has turned to their own ruin, have a very simple remedy for the evils under which they labour. They say, "Extend the suffrage; give us a due sway in the legislature, and we will soon protect our own interests. The revolution of 1832 in Great Britain, and that of 1830 in France, has turned entirely to the advantage of the *bourgeoisie*; and we must have another Reform Bill to give us the blessings which Louis Blanc, Ledru Rollin, and the Socialists promise to France." This idea has taken a great hold of the public mind in a certain class

of society. It is the natural reaction of experience against the innumerable evils which free-trade and a contracted currency have brought upon the country. The manufacturing and working classes, who joined the trading interest in raising the cry for these measures, finding themselves now crushed, or deriving no benefit from their effects, see no remedy but in taking the matter entirely into their own hands, and putting an end at once, by obtaining the command of the House of Commons, to all those measures which gratuitously, and for no conceivable purpose but the interest of the trades, spread ruin and desolation through the nation.

We object strenuously to any such change; and that from no attachment to the free-trade and fettered currency system, to which we have always given the most determined resistance, but from a firm desire for, and clear perception of, the interests of the great body of the people, to which, though often in opposition to their blind and mistaken wishes, we have uniformly given the most undeviating support.

A uniform system of voting, such as a £5 or household suffrage, which is now proposed as a remedy for all the evils of society, is of necessity a *class representation*, and the class to which it gives the ascendency is the *lowest* in whom the suffrage is vested. It must be so, because the poor being always and in every country much more numerous than the rich, the humblest class of voters under every uniform system must always be incomparably the most numerous. It is this circumstance which has given the ten-pounders the command of the House of Commons under the new constitution; they are the humblest and therefore the most numerous class enfranchised by the Reform Act, and consequently, under the uniform household suffrage, they have the majority. They have so for the same reason that, under a similar uniform system, the privates in an army would outnumber the whole officers, commissioned and non-commissioned. But if the suffrage is reduced so low as to admit the representatives of the operatives and "proletaires," or those whom they influence, (which household or a £5 suffrage would undoubtedly do,) what measures in the present state of society in this country, and feeling throughout the world, would they immediately adopt? We have only to look at the newly formed republic of France, where such a system is established, to receive the answer. Repudiation of state engagements, (as in the case of the railways;) confiscation of property under the name of a graduated income tax; the abolition of primogeniture, in order to ruin the landed interest; the issue of assignats, in order to sustain the state under the shock to credit which such measures would necessarily occasion, might with confidence be looked for. And the question to be considered is, would these measures in the end benefit *any class of society*, or, least of all, the operative, in a country such as Great Britain, containing, in proportion to its population, a greater number of persons dependent on daily wages for their existence than any other that ever existed?

What is to be expected from such ruin to credit and capital but the immediate stoppage of employment, and throwing of millions out of bread? Even if the whole land in the country were seized and divided, it would afford no general relief – it would only shift the suffering from one class to another. What, under such a system, would become of the millions who now exist on the surplus expenditure of the wealthy? They would all be ruined – England would be overrun by a host of starving cultivators like France or Ireland. A plunge down to household suffrage would soon effect the work of destruction, by reducing us all in a few years to the condition of Irish bog-trotters. It is no security against these dangers to say that the working class, if they get the majority, will take care of themselves, and eschew whatever is hurtful to their interests. Men do not know what is to prove ultimately injurious in public, any more than they perceive, in most cases, what is to be for their final interest in private life. The bourgeoisie got the command of the country in France by the Revolution of 1830, but have they benefited by the change? Let the enormous expenditure of Louis Philippe's government, and the present disastrous state of commerce in France, give the answer. The workmen of Paris got the entire command of the government by the Revolution of 1848, and already 85,000 of them are kept alive, only working at the "Ateliers Nationaux," while 200,000 are lounging about, eating up the country with bayonets in their hands. The middle classes got the command of

Great Britain by the Reform Act, and their representatives set about free-trade and restricted currency measures, which have spread distress and bankruptcy to an unparalleled extent among themselves. The Reform Bill, by establishing these measures, has destroyed a fourth of the realised capital of Great Britain.[8] Household or universal suffrage would at once sweep away *a half* of what remains, as it has recently done in France. And in what condition would the 30,000,000 inhabitants of the British empire be if *three-fourths* of the capital – in other words, three-fourths of the means of employing labour, or purchasing its fruits – were destroyed? We should have Skibbereens in every village of Great Britain, and grass growing in half of London.

What, then, is to be done to allay the present ferment, and tranquillise the country, when so rudely shaken by internal distress and external excitement? Are we to sit with our hands folded waiting till the tempest subsides? and if the present system is continued, is there any ground for believing it ever will subside? We answer, *decidedly not*. We must do something – and not a little, but a great deal. But what is required is not to augment the political power of the working classes, but to remove their grievances; – not to give them the government of the state, which they can exercise only to their own and the nation's ruin, but to place them in such a condition that they may no longer desire to govern it. This can be done only by abandoning the system of class government for the interest chiefly of the moneyed interests, and returning to the old system of general protective and national administration.

The first thing which is indispensably necessary towards the restoration of confidence and enterprise in the moneyed classes, and consequent employment and happiness in the poor, is to repeal the Bank Charter Acts of 1844 and 1845; and in lieu thereof to establish such a system as may provide a *safe, sufficient, and equable* circulation for the empire. Above all, it is necessary to establish a circulation which shall be capable of *expanding*, instead of *contracting*, as specie is drawn out of the country. This is the one thing needful. Till this is done, every attempt to alleviate the existing misery, in a durable way, will prove abortive. Nobody wants to have French assignats issued amongst us, or to have every insolvent who chooses to call himself a banker authorised to issue currency *ad libitum*, and substantially usurp the Queen's prerogative by coining worthless paper into doubtful money. But as little can the nation go on longer with our circulation based exclusively on gold coin, and liable to be contracted as that coin is drawn out of the country; thereby *doubling the evil*, by first inducing speculation when specie is plentiful, and then withdrawing the currency when it becomes scarce. Still less can this be borne, when a system of free-trade has been established amongst us which has enormously increased our importations, especially in articles of food and rude produce, for which experience proves nothing but cash will be taken by the holders; and which, in consequence, has induced a consequent *tendency outward* in the precious metals, from which, if no corresponding increase in domestic circulation is permitted, nothing but contraction to credit stoppage to speculation, and ruin to industry is to be anticipated. Least of all can such a system of drawing in paper as the gold goes out, be endured when political circumstances have so much increased the demand for the precious metals in the neighbouring states; when the revolutions in France and Germany have at once rendered hoarding general in those countries, and deluged us with their bankrupt stocks, for which nothing but specie will be taken in exchange; and when the commencement of hostilities, both in Italy and Germany, has occasioned the usual demand for gold, as the most portable of the precious metals, to meet the necessities of war.

The way in which the dreadful evils consequent upon commercial credit, and consequently universal employment, being kept dependent on such an unstable equilibrium as that which gold must ever, and most of all in such circumstances, afford, is perfectly evident. What is wanted is something to *equalise the supply of currency*; to contract paper when the precious metals are abundant, and, consequently, credit is becoming dangerously expansive, and to expand it when they are withdrawn,

[8] This is within the mark. It, has lowered the funds from 100 to 80, or a fifth; railway stock on an average a third; West India property nine-tenths; and mercantile stock, in most cases, nearly a half.

and, consequently, credit is in danger of being ruinously contracted. Sir R. Peel's system does just the reverse of this: it pours paper in profusion through the country, and consequently fosters absurd and improvident speculation, when specie is abundant, and draws it in suddenly, and with frightful rapidity, the moment that the precious metals begin to be withdrawn, either from the effect of extended importations or foreign warfare. To go right, and obviate the dreadful evils which their system has introduced, we have nothing to do but to establish a monetary policy *precisely the reverse*. What is wanted is a *sliding scale for paper-money*, – a system which shall tend to contract paper issues when specie is abundant, and pour them forth with restorative and beneficial vigour the moment that it begins to disappear. Thus, and thus alone, it was that Mr Pitt enabled the country to combat the dangers and surmount the difficulties of the revolutionary war.[9] Under Sir R. Peel's system, the nation, and every one in it, would have been bankrupt when the bank stopped payment in 1797, and we should long ere this have been irrecoverably rendered a province of France.

It belongs to practical men, versed in the mysteries of Lombard Street and the Stock Exchange, to say *how* this important object is to be attained with due attention to the security of the notes issued, and sufficient safeguards against an over-issue, and consequent injury to capital, by an undue rise of prices owing to that cause. That the thing is *possible* is self-evident. It appears to be essential to such a system that one of two things should be done. Either that the issuing of notes should be left to all banks, under the limitation that private banks should be obliged to take up their notes at all times, – in Bank of England paper or gold *or silver*– and deposit government securities to the extent of the notes so issued, to be appropriated to their payment in case of bankruptcy; and that the Bank of England should be bound to pay its notes in gold *or silver*, at the price those metals bear *at the time of presentment*. *Or*, that the issuing of notes, like the coining of money, should be confined entirely to government or its officers; and that the regulation of their amount should be entrusted to certain elevated functionaries – like the commissioners of the national debt – with instructions to them to regulate their issues by the price of gold and silver, *increasing* them when the rise in the value of those metals showed that they were leaving the country, and contracting them when the price fell, and it was evident that the necessity for an extended paper circulation was passing away.

Of course it would be necessary, under such a system, to impose some limit to the obligation of the Bank of England to pay in specie; but this might be done either by obliging that establishment to pay in either of those metals at the current price they bore in the market at the date of presentment, or by providing, that beyond a certain amount of notes payable on demand, as £40,000,000 for Great Britain, and Ireland, notes of a *different colour*, as red, should be issued, which were exchangeable for specie only when the precious metals had again fallen to a certain price in the market. These notes should be issued when gold rises to a certain price, and is evidently leaving the country – just as grain from government stores should be issued to the people in periods of scarcity – and drawn in when it returns, and the price falls. We throw these out only as crude suggestions, which may or may not be adequate to answer the purpose in view. What we rest upon, and press in the most earnest manner upon the consideration of the country, is the *absolute necessity* of altering the present system of contracting the paper when the gold is taken away – in other words, *limiting the issues of bread when the beef fails*– and substituting for it one of extending the issue of paper when the precious metals are withdrawn; in other words, *increasing the issues of bread when those of beef have become deficient*.

The next measure which appears indispensable to secure internal tranquillity in the empire is, to make a very considerable government grant, to enable the railway companies to complete the principal lines now on foot, but still in an unfinished state. Every consideration of justice, expedience, and necessity, calls for such a grant. Many of these railways can be completed in no other way. Their directors have already borrowed all the money on the security of the undertaking which the law allows (a third;) and the diminished means and straitened credit of the shareholders, for the

[9] Bank of England notes in circulation, —— *Alison's England in 1815 and 1845, Appendix.*

present at least, has disabled them from answering any further calls. The works must stand still, a deformity and a disgrace to the country, if government relief is not afforded. Parliament has declared the expedience of these lines by having passed the bills for their formation. Most, perhaps all, of these would have been completed ere this, had not the fetters imposed on the currency by the Bank Charter Act so straitened credit that it has become impossible. The very *name* of government being willing to advance a certain sum, as two or three millions, to enable these companies to resume their work, would so restore and vivify credit, that it is probable a very small part of the sum voted would be taken up by these undertakings. The restoration of private credit, by such a measure on the part of government, would unlock the immense coffers of wealth which now, from the prostration of private credit, lie unemployed in the country. For, such is the strange and anomalous condition in which we stand, that while our streets are crowded with thousands and hundreds of thousands of unemployed labourers and artisans seeking employment, our banks and insurance offices are crowded with thousands and hundreds of thousands of unemployed capital seeking investment. Yet these two superfluities cannot reach or relieve each other. Why? Because credit and currency are wanting to enable the one to pass over to the other. Let government lay the foundation of the bridge, and the communication, to mutual advantage, will soon be restored.

Incalculable is the benefit which such a resumption of these works would occasion, both to the individuals connected with, or employed by them, and the country at large. It would give bread at once to hundreds of thousands of unemployed labourers, who have been seduced from their regular avocations by the high wages offered two years ago on the lines, and now find return to their former employments impossible, from these having been filled up: it would thin the Chartist and household suffrage meetings, by stopping the distress which fills them, and giving the working classes something better to do than listening to intemperate and seditious speeches: it would render productive the capital and labour already expended on these undertakings, and give their directors the means both of paying a dividend to the proprietors, and liquidating, at no distant period, the whole debt borrowed from the state: it would assuage and relieve unbounded distress, both in the once wealthy and the labouring classes of the state: it would vivify and facilitate commerce, by opening up means of communication through districts requiring it, and to the formation of which the sanction of the legislature on that ground has been given; – but most of all, it would evince, by deeds more eloquent than words, the sympathy of government with the sufferings of the people, wrest from the agitators their strongest arguments against the constitution as it stands, and relieve government of the fearful imputation to which it is now exposed, of first having encouraged the nation to engage in vast and important internal measures, and then deprived them, by legislative enactments, of the means of carrying them, into complete execution.

A third step which is indispensable to disarm the Chartist agitation and restore internal confidence and peace to the country, is to provide on a great scale, and by government machinery, for the relief of the *labour market*. Various causes have now conspired to render this a matter of paramount necessity. In Ireland, the long-continued agitation for Repeal, coinciding with the indolent and improvident habits of the people, the desolating effects of the potato famine of 1846, and the enervating consequences of the noble government grant of £10,000,000 to meet its necessities, joined to the seditious and treasonable efforts of the insane Young Ireland party, have so completely paralysed industry, that the Emerald Isle may now be regarded as little more than a huge workshop of pauperism, a sort of *officina pauperiei*, from whence starving multitudes are incessantly issuing to deluge the adjoining states. The number of emigrants who left it for distant colonies in 1847 was above one hundred thousand, but that is but a small part of the dreadful stream of pauperism which incessantly pours forth from its still crowded shores. In the first nine months of 1847, the number of Irish who came to Glasgow was 49,981: and that number has since been on the increase, for, from the last report of the parochial board of Glasgow, it appears, that in *five* months and ten days preceding 25th April 1848, the number of Irish who landed in Glasgow was 42,288! This is at the rate of *nearly*

100,000 *a-year*; and these squalid immigrants, let it be recollected, come, to a country where labour has already, from the effects of free-trade and a fettered currency, and the disastrous stoppage to orders produced by the French and German revolutions, become a perfect drug in the market; and when in and around the single city of Glasgow, above 100,000 human beings, including dependants, are already out of work! Individual charity, local efforts, are nugatory against such prodigious masses of pauperism; you might as well have expected the staff of the Russian parishes to have resisted the invasion of 1812.

Perhaps there is nothing which has occurred, in our time, so much to be regretted, as that the noble grant of ten millions from Great Britain to relieve the distress of Ireland during the famine, was not, in part at least, devoted to the purposes of emigration. We all know how it was spent. No inconsiderable portion was absorbed by the never-failing frauds of the local Irish agents employed in its distribution, and the remainder in making good roads bad ones. No part was employed in a form which could reproduce itself. There was one thing, and but one, *already good* in Ireland, and that was the roads. On that one good thing the whole magnificent grant was wasted. Now half the grant, £5,000,000 sterling, would not only have provided 700,000 or 800,000 Irish with the means of crossing the Atlantic, but it would have transported them from the coast up the country to the frontier of the Forest. That is the great point which is never attended to by those who contend for free-trade in emigration; in other words, for liberty to transport the emigrants in crowded and crazy ships, half manned and ill provisioned, to the shores of America, and then leave them in sheds at the first harbour to starve or die of fever.

The advocates for free-trade in emigration forget that labour is as great a drug on the sea-coast of America as on the crowded shores of the Emerald Isle: it is no unusual thing to see five thousand emigrants, chiefly from Ireland, land at New York in a single day. But as much as labour is redundant in the American sea-port towns, it is scarce and in demand in the far west. Millions and tens of millions of unappropriated acres are there to be had for the asking; and an able-bodied man is sure to be instantly taken up at half-a-crown or three shillings a-day. The American papers say that "a stout European, with nothing in the world but his arms and his legs, *if moved on to the far west*, is worth *a thousand dollars* to the United States." He is worth more to England; for, if settled in Canada, the Irish pauper immediately becomes a consumer of British manufactures to the extent of £2 a head: if to Australia, to the extent of £10 a head. The free-trader in emigration stops short of all these things: instead of transporting the emigrant to the edge of the Forest, where his labour could produce these results to himself and his country, it leaves him to pine, with his starving children, in a shed on the quay – a burden to the community he is fitted to bless, and carrying with him the seeds of a mortal typhus pestilence into any region which, if he survives, he may visit. As a proof that these statements are not overcharged, we subjoin an official return of the fate of the emigrants who landed under the free-trade system in Canada in 1847.[10] It displays the most stupendous instance that ever was exhibited of the manner in which the absurd principles of free-trade, when applied

[10] Free-Trade in Emigration. – The numbers who embarked in Europe, in 1847, for Canada, were 90,006; viz., from England, 32,228; from Ireland, 54,329; from Scotland, 3,752; and from Germany, 7,697. Of the whole number, 91,882 were steerage passengers, 684 cabin, and 5,541 were infants. Deducting from this aggregate the Germans and the cabin passengers, the entire number of emigrants who embarked at British ports was 89,738, of whom 5,293 died before their arrival, leaving 84,445 who reached the colony. Of these, it is estimated that six-sevenths were from Ireland. Among the thousands who reached the colony, a large portion were labouring under disease in its worst types, superinduced by the extremity of famine and misery which they had suffered previous to embarkation. Of the 84,445 who reached the colony alive, no less than 10,037 died at arrival – viz., at quarantine, 3,452; at the Quebec Emigrant Hospital, 1,041; at the Montreal Hospital, 3,579; and at other places in the two Canadas, 1,965 – leaving 74,408. But of these no less than 30,265 were admitted into hospital for medical treatment. Thus it will be seen that more than one-seventh of the total embarkations died, that more than one-eighth of the total arrivals died, and that more than one-third of those who arrived were received into hospital. Up to the 12th of November last, the number of destitute emigrants forwarded from the agency at Montreal to Upper Canada was 38,781; viz., male adults, 12,932; female adults, 12,153, children under twelve, 10,616; infants 3,080. —*Report of Executive Council, Canada. Parl. Paper*, May 5, 1848.

to pauperism, misery, and typhus fever, may convert what might, under proper management, be the greatest possible blessing to our own people and the colonies, into the greatest possible curse to both.

What should be done is perfectly plain and generally acknowledged. You will not find ten men of sense or information in Great Britain, out of the precincts of the colonial and other government offices, who have two opinions on the subject. To relieve the labour market in Great Britain and Ireland, a great effort should immediately be made to transport some hundred thousand of *the very poorest class*, who *cannot emigrate on their own resources*, to Canada, the Cape, and Australia. Wages in the latter country are from 4s. to 5s. a-day for common, 6s. and 7s. a-day for skilled labour. Ireland is the great quarter to which this relief should be extended: if its surplus multitudes are taken off, the pressure on Great Britain will speedily be abated. Ships of war, to lighten the cost of transport, should be employed to transport the emigrants as they do our regiments. Government barracks should be established with proper officers, to receive the emigrants at their landing, separate the healthy from the sick, establish the latter in proper hospitals, so as to stop the spread of typhus fever, and forward, at the public expense, the healthy and active to the frontier. Other officers should be appointed there to allot to them ground, find them tools, furnish them with seed, or provide them with employment. This should be done to at least three hundred thousand or four hundred thousand emigrants annually for some years to come. We should like to see the Chartism or Repeal Mania which would long stand against such a course of humane, and withal wise and truly liberal, legislation.

But such great measures would require money. The average cost of each emigrant so transported and looked to in the colony would be £6 or £7; three or four hundred thousand persons so provided with the means of emigration would cost from £2,000,000 to £2,500,000 a-year. Granted. – Could the money be better bestowed? It would not yield no return, like that devoted to making good Irish roads bad ones: it would convert three hundred thousand paupers annually into consumers of British manufactures to the amount of three or four pounds a head: it would add £1,000,000 or £1,200,000 a-year to the export of British manufactures: it would secure a durable vent for our goods by planting British descendants in the New World: it would spread joy and comfort through Manchester, Birmingham, and Glasgow, not less than Tipperary and Galway: it would extinguish – and extinguish by means of Christian beneficence – the flame of disaffection in the realm: it would give to our people all that French socialism has that is really beneficial, and save them from the unutterable and incalculable evils with which it is fraught: it would restore the balance between capital and industry, so grievously and ruinously deranged by the effects of free-trade of late years: it would go far to alleviate the misery which the pernicious dogmas regarding the currency have spread through the country. For blessings such as these, is the issue of exchequer bills to the extent of two or three millions a-year for some years an extravagant price to pay? Would not *five times the sum* be at once borrowed by the state in a single year if war were to break out with France or America? Are the dangers of any such war to be compared to those which must inevitably be incurred if the present frightful mass of pauperism, idleness, and destitution, is allowed to continue unrelieved, and to go on increasing in the country? What must, in the end, be the result of such a state of things, but internal anarchy, foreign degradation, ultimate ruin? And is there no obligation upon those whose policy since 1846 has brought these calamities on the nation, to apply the national credit in the attempt at least to relieve them? Hear the just and eloquent observations of the *Times* on the subject: —

> "There is a multitudinous population growing yearly more multitudinous, more exacting, more wretched. The end of each succeeding year sees the addition of nearly a quarter of a million of human beings to the inhabitants of this country. The crowded seats of our manufactures and commerce – Liverpool and Manchester, Nottingham and Stockport – teem with the annual increment of creatures, who exclaim, 'Give us work and bread.' How shall we meet this cry? Shall we tell them that work is an affair of demand; that demand depends upon competition; that competition is an effect of population; that population outruns subsistence; that they

> are too many; in a word, that they have no right to exist? They would be bold men – that would be a bold government, which should hold such language as this. With Chartism in front, and discontent in the rear, it would be perilous to begin such lecturing. But is not the principle acted on, though not avowed, when – with a vast territorial dominion, in which labour might grow into power, and poverty into wealth – with mines of ore and fields of fertility – with capital calling for labour, and adventure crying for help – the State refuses to acknowledge the duty of settling its redundant multitudes in its own distant lands, or discharges it in a niggardly and grudging mood?
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> "The danger of such neglect or such parsimony is great. Time glides on, adding alike to the numbers and the discontent of the masses. Misery has strange axioms. The misery of multitudes invents a wild policy. They whose normal condition is endurance, will avenge themselves on the empire by a normal agitation. They whom the national wealth does not assist in bettering their fortune, will wage an obstinate war against wealth, property, and order. We have put down Chartism; but we have not conciliated discontent. Let us beware lest the discontented become the majority. Much depends upon ourselves, much on the use to which we turn our existing establishments; and no establishments have we more valuable than our colonies. A colonial empire founded on the sparings of our superfluous wealth and the cravings of our unemployed industry, would be a grander commemoration of victorious order and triumphant law than a century of hospitals or a myriad of wash-houses. Those who were elated and those who were dejected by the 10th of April, might alike view with pleasure the glorious fabric of a new empire springing from the ruins of a broken faction and the energies of a noble purpose, emblematic of the 'bow of hope that spans the earth' – emblematic of the only faith that ever yet inculcated liberty, fraternity, and equality aright." —*Times*, May 12, 1848.

But towards finding this vent for our indigent and unemployed population at home, in the colonies, it is indispensable that the colonies should be preserved to the British crown; and from the effects of free-trade, it is very doubtful whether this will long be the case. Every body knows that the West Indies have been utterly ruined by the act of 1846: estates are valueless, and the planting of canes is rapidly ceasing. We know of an estate which, within fifteen years, was sold for £38,000, which was knocked down within these few weeks for £20! To give an idea of the feelings which the unexampled injustice to which they have been subjected have excited in these once noble and loyal islands, we subjoin an extract from the *Jamaica Despatch* of April 7: —

> "The affairs of Jamaica have now arrived at that desperate crisis that there is, we believe, not one man in the colony whose dependence rests solely on property invested within it, that would not, could his single voice effect the change, pronounce at once for adhesion to any other government than that which has beggared him. Loyalty is, at best, but a sentiment dependent for stability upon circumstances. We love our country so long as, and because we think, our country protects our lives, our liberties, and our properties. We are patriots whilst the government of our country secures to us those possessions which our industry has earned for us, and which the written constitution has guaranteed us. All human experience shows this limit to the most exalted spirit of loyalty and patriotism. True it is we have not the power of Canada. We are as unable as we are unwilling to change our lot by force; but let England beware lest passive alienation of every sentiment that can attach us to her as a nation do not prove even more dangerous to her colonial power than any active spirit of disaffection could be. This magnificent colony has, indeed, been sinfully

> and treasonably sacrificed. *The property of the Queen's subjects has been confiscated without offence on their part*; whilst, in a political point of view, each day renders the colony less and less valuable to the Crown as a national dependency. All commerce between Jamaica and the mother country must speedily cease. Of exports there can be none. Ministers – the fatal Whig Government, which has proved to be the evil genius of the West Indies whenever destiny has placed it in the ascendant – have pronounced the final doom of West Indian cultivation. After August next, when the present crops shall have been taken off, *five estates in six must of necessity cease to become sugar producers*." —*Jamaica Despatch*, April 7.

Canada will, ere long, if the present system be adhered to, follow the example of the West Indies; and having ceased, from the destruction of all its privileges, to have any interest in the maintenance of its connexion with Great Britain, it will take the first convenient opportunity to break it off. If we have lost our colonies, what security have we that they will not refuse to admit the stream of pauperism which now flows into them from the parent state: that they will not treat them as the fraternising French republicans did the British artisans, and send them all home? And even if they should still consent to receive them, what security should we have for the maintenance of export of the £16,000,000 of British manufactures which now go out to our colonies, if, like the Americans, they levy their whole revenue to maintain their independent government upon imports from this country? Recollect the exports to America, with 20,000,000 inhabitants, are not £10,000,000 annually, or 10s. a head; to Canada, with 1,900,000, about £3,800,000, or £2 a head; and to the West Indies, hitherto about £3,000,000 to 800,000 souls, or nearly £4 a head.

If the English like free-trade – if they are content to have their sovereigns by the million go out, as in 1847, to buy foreign grain, and foreign manufactures supplant British in all our staple branches of manufacture, by all means let them have it. Let them perpetuate the year 1847, with all its blessings, to all eternity. Free-trade is their own work; let them taste its fruits, and drain the cup they have selected to the dregs. But the colonies, be it recollected, had no hand in introducing that system. They were utterly and entirely disfranchised by the Reform Bill; schedules A and B cut up their representation by the roots. Free-trade was forced upon them by the representatives of Great Britain, not only without their concurrence, but in opposition to their most earnest remonstrances. Whatever may be said as to our present distress being the work of our own hands, and of our now reaping the fruits of the seed we have sown, that is wholly inapplicable to the colonies. Protection to their industry is what they have always prayed for; it is to them the condition of existence; it is the sole bond which unites them to the empire. Soon the bond and the connexion will be dissolved. And when dissolved, we shall have the woful reflection, – we shall incur the damning imputation with future times, that it was lost for no national or worthy object; from no foreign danger, or external catastrophe; but from the mere ascendency of interested legislation in the parent state: and that the greatest colonial empire that ever existed, that which had grown up during two centuries, and resisted the assaults of Napoleon in the plenitude of his power – was dissolved from the desire to maintain a principle which promised no greater benefit but, for a few years, to lower the price of sugar a penny a pound to the British consumers.

It is from measures such as we have now advocated, and from them alone, that we expect the extinction of the Chartist or household suffrage agitation, and the restoration of the wonted feelings of steady loyalty in the British nation. The subordinate matters, so much the objects of anxiety and care to the legislature, are not to be despised; but they will prove entirely nugatory, if measures such as these are not simultaneously and vigorously adopted. There is no way of really improving the condition of the working classes, but by augmenting the demand for labour. This is what they want; we never hear of them petitioning for wash-houses and cold baths, or a health-of-towns bill: it is a "fair day's wage for a fair day's work" which they always desire. Rely upon it, they are right. By all means give them wash-houses and cold baths; broad streets and common sewers; airy rooms and

moderately sized houses; but recollect, if you do not give them work at the same time, it will all prove nugatory. Lodge them all by a miracle, or a successful revolution, in Buckingham Palace and Stafford House to-morrow, and in a week, if you do not give them the means of earning good wages, they will be as filthy, squalid, and diseased as ever. Thirty families will be located in the grand saloon; twenty-five in the green library; forty or fifty starving Irishmen will be comfortably lodged on the great stair. Typhus will spread, sedition will be hatched, treason prepared in the royal palaces, as well as in St Giles, or Manchester. There was not a more depraved or miserable set in Paris than the seven or eight hundred persons who squatted down in the Tuileries after the late revolution, and were only dislodged by bringing up artillery. Restore protection to colonial industry; relieve the great works in progress throughout the empire; engage in a great system of government emigration; give the country a currency adequate to its necessities, and commensurate to its transactions; and you may bid defiance to Chartist agitation, and drain off, if you cannot extirpate, the stream of Irish pauperism and treason.

STODDART AND ANGLING

[11]We do not lose a moment – we take the earliest opportunity – to thank Mr Stoddart for his book. Well, this is a cool piece of effrontery! So say some flippant folks, who fancy themselves abreast of the literature of the day, and in whose arid waste of mind, as in the desert, one may pick up now and then a few dates. They are so kind as to remind us that Mr Stoddart's book was published early in the spring of 1847. Apart altogether from our perfect knowledge of the time of the publication, we fling back the charge of effrontery with imperturbable contempt. The spring of 1847! There never was any such season. Who saw the glimpses of its smiles? who heard the chirping of its songs? who smelt its perfume? who felt its refreshing airs? who nibbled its green shoots? None of the human senses recognised its presence, or acknowledged its influence. Notorious it is that a tiny urchin in an infant school, whose little teeth had been previously knocking together in its head in shivering concussion for a month, refused, when brought up to the mellifluous passage, to perpetrate the vernal invocation of Mr James Thomson; and equally defying the allurements or the terrors – the sugar-cane or the birch-rod – the moral or the physical force of tuition, pronounced with Denmanic emphasis any allusion to "etherial mildness," or "showers of roses," even in the month of May 1847, to be a delusion, a mockery, and a snare. He never angled who speaks of the spring of 1847. The gentle craft perished for a while beneath the obdurate inclemency of the weather, and the ceaseless floods of snow-water, which polluted every lucid stream into "gruel thick and slab." We do not pretend to remember when the cloud and the tempest passed away; at all events, it was too late for angling purposes. In breezy, ay in stormy days, there are many bold and happy hits to be made by the cunning hand; but the zany, who throws his line in the teeth of a perpetual tornado, will catch, of course, nothing except what the indignant lexicographer has placed at the extremity farthest from the worm. Besides, there are those, including our author, who think that angling is a bilateral pastime. It is a part of their creed, (which we may look into hereafter,) that the silly fishes enjoy the fun of being captured, and often chuckle audibly on being "encreeled" by a triumphant artist like Mr Stoddart. And lordly salmon, or gentlemanlike trout, may probably dislike, as much as their adversary, an excess of piercing winds and dirty waters. In short, it was thoroughly understood, in the beginning of 1847, by the fisher and the fished, that the atmosphere was too preposterously rude to deserve encouragement at the hands or fins of either party. The temporary cessation of hostilities was accordingly complete. What could we do?

Little difficulty, to be sure, there was in finding pretexts daily for putting up the rod in the dining-room four or five times in the course of the forenoon, and executing, without line, a phantom cast of unerring accuracy across the table diagonally into an imaginary eddy rippling and softly gurgling on the floor round several bottles of Alsop's pale ale, linking sometimes, in our mood of finest frenzy, such preprandial dexterity, with the apparition in the same locality, at a later hour, of a cod's head and shoulders, not without oyster sauce. The music of the reel was also occasionally stirred by the supposititious tugs of a voracious gillaroo, (which is by far the dreadfullest fish of which we any where read,) enacted for the nonce by the same curly scion of truth who disdained to lend himself, in the miscalled spring of 1847, to the untruthful sycophancy of the bard of Ednam. The very fact, however, of its being "our young barbarian at play," and not a gillaroo in earnest, who was thus —

> "Untwisting all the chains that tie
> The hidden soul of harmony,"

carried the sound of the whirring thread to our ears "with a difference." The glancing armoury of the fishing-book, meriting better than Hector's helmet did the untranslatable epithet of Homeric

[11] *The Angler's Companion to the Rivers and Lochs of Scotland.* By Thomas Tod Stoddart. William Blackwood and Sons, Edinburgh and London. 1847.

monotony, was over and over again paraded and arranged, disordered and re-classified, extricated and intermingled, from pocket to pocket, until each particular hook in the pools and currents of our fancy became prospectively commemorative of multitudinous massacres, "making the green one red." But the basket or the bag, (and we prefer the latter,) would have felt, in the mean time, heavier under the burden of a single minnow than it ever did feel beneath the possible pressure of shoals of contingent bull-trouts. The experiment of wading through the house in enormous India-rubber boots, taking four steps at once in coming down stairs, and jumping suddenly from chairs upon the carpet, for the purpose of persuading ourselves that we were getting into deep water, afforded but a very transitory hallucination. The act of jerking at dinner a young turkey, with a gaff, from a remote dish, to our plate, did not elicit the general acknowledgment of its graceful precision which we had anticipated; while an excellent and polished steel-yard, with which, in the absence of a salmon, we had been practising in the kitchen on a casual leg of mutton, having dazzled, perhaps, the eye of the butcher's boy, and being forgotten by us for a brief hour or so, has been, "like the lost Pleiad, seen no more below." During such moments, the memory even of delectable old Isaac was losing a little of its perennial fragrance – the reminiscences of all kinds of fishes were beginning to stink in the nostrils. "Who comes here? – A grenadier;" and in walked "The Angler's Companion to the Lochs and Rivers of Scotland, by Thomas Tod Stoddart."

Ordinary mortals, to whom, as to Peter Bell, yellow primroses are simply yellow primroses, might instantly, upon getting the book, open it, read it, and be delighted with it. But we sat for six weeks gazing at the volume without daring or wishing to lay a finger upon it. There was a great deal for us to think about before spreading our sails for another voyage with an old companion. The fact is, that we were humming, after our own fashion, one of Mr Stoddart's angling songs at the moment when his new work was placed before us, Now, these songs were not published yesterday; and many a time and oft out of them had we amused ourselves by forming the liveliest picture of the angler's life, pursuits, meditations, and emotions. From his being up with the sweet thrushes to meet "the morn upon the lea," till "homeward from the stream he turns," we followed him in Stoddart's musical track. His call to "bring him osier, line, and reel" – his scrutiny of the airs and clouds of heaven – his communings with bird and bee, flower and fay – his welcome to the cuckoo – his blessing of the "spring-tide bland" – his entreaty to the winds to waken —

"For the low welcome sound of their wandering wings" —

his repose and summer trance, "beneath a willow wide" – his pensive musings, and comments, shaped by the enchanting realities around him, or by the pleasant shadows of his own memory and fancy – his feats of guile and skill – his patience and his toil – the excitement of his suspense – the exultation of his victory, and the joyousness and harmony which round his well-spent day, – all were represented and embodied in numbers than which none more melodious, heartier, or happier ever strengthened and gladdened, by stream or board, the disciples of Cotton and Walton. We paused before unfolding a new book; and then we read it thoroughly from beginning to end, without missing any word.

But time brings with it many vicissitudes. Winter, when nobody but a Stoddart fishes; swarms of European revolutions, which keep every thing, including fishing-rods, out of joint; and again, in this present 1848, a terrible spring-tide, which, standing sentinel at our doors with the keenness of a sword and the strength of a portcullis, has forbidden any body to think of fishing this year till June; – these things have inevitably, forcibly, and wisely obliged us to be silent. We take the earliest opportunity to thank Mr Stoddart for his book.

"Who is the happy warrior?" appears to us to be an interrogatory as nearly as possible destitute of all meaning. But upon the double hypothesis that it may have some meaning, and that we can paint in fresco, such a question might suggest an idea that the felicitous gentleman for whom the poet asks

would be best pictured as Julius Caesar in the act of correcting the proof-sheets of his Commentaries. To do good and great actions is agreeable, but dangerous; to write well and nobly of the great and good things we have done is also agreeable, but troublesome; but when the danger and the trouble are both past and gone, to read what we have well written of what we have well done, with the conviction that an endless posterity will read it after us with pleasure and approbation, must be, we shall venture to imagine, most prodigiously agreeable to any respectable individual, whether he is actually a soldier, having purchased his commission at a heavy regulation price, or whether he is only provisionally obnoxious to be balloted for militia service, or accidentally liable to be called out, with a curse and a cutlet in his month, for the guerilla warfare of a special constable. We avow for ourselves, without a blush, that we are only one of those who may become warriors hereafter by statutory or municipal contingency. As yet we have not served in any campaign. On one occasion, indeed, the housemaid discovered, at early dawn, sprouting from the key-hole of the door, a notice, by which we were hastily summoned to quell a dreadful tumult at nine o'clock the night before. Late as the summons came, on reading it a thrill of posthumous glory permeated our frame; nor, when perusing in the newspapers at breakfast the eloquent recognition by the public authorities of the services of other special constables, could we repress the riotous throbbings of martial spirit and martial sympathy within us, as being one who, though *de facto* inert in dressing-gown and slippers, was entitled *de jure*, as the notice testified, to be active with badge and baton. We severely reprimanded, of course, the housemaid for bringing into the house stray bits of paper, which might have wrapped up most deleterious combustibles. She promised to be more cautious in future; and it has so happened that the magistrates have never taken practical advantage of our vigilant anxiety to protect the tranquillity of the city. But we are well aware that it has ever been exactly with a corresponding spirit that we have studied the Gallic battles and campaigns of the great Roman, where we have been free alike from the risk of fighting, and the botheration of writing. Our impression is, therefore, on the whole, exceedingly strong that the happy warrior may be more faithfully portrayed by ourselves than by Cæsar.

According to these principles of interpretation, let us inquire, who is the happy angler? To such a question any body who, in the former case, prefers Cæsar's claim to ours, will not fail to reply by bawling out the name of Stoddart. The parallel is a very good one. There is nothing in the science of angling theoretically of which Mr Stoddart is ignorant; there is nothing in the art of angling practically which Mr Stoddart has not tried with his own hand. He has been writing the annals of a laborious, persevering, incessant, and successful experience. He tells others what they may do, by showing them vividly and precisely what he has himself done. It is the record of a conqueror whose career exhibits occurrences so numerous, various, and striking, that the simple narrative of events teaches general principles; the mere accumulation of facts causes theory to vegetate – the movements which lead to victory on a particular occasion are adopted as laws to regulate subsequent operations in similar circumstances; the strategy of the emergency is accepted as universally normal. In a history so instructive, there must necessarily be a remarkable amount of patience and zeal, assiduity and skill, quick apprehension, and sagacious reflection. And where, as in the present instance, it happens that all this information is communicated with healthy racy vigour, and picturesque effect of language, while a dewy freshness of enthusiasm exhilarates the whole composition, it is not surely very surprising that, comfortably pendulous in our rocking-chair, conscious of never having encountered a billionth part of the fatigues undergone by Mr Stoddart, and possessing, in the manageable volume in our hand, a complete repertory of the fruits of the toil, experience, and judgment of that "admirable Triton," we should thus complacently believe that we are the happy angler – leaving it of course to Mr Stoddart, if he likes, to be a Julius Cæsar.

From the frontispiece we start, and after perambulating the book, to the frontispiece we return. "A day's fishing" will then be wondrously intelligible, and ought to be regarded with an angler's love, and an angler's pride. The picture from which the engraving is taken has been long familiar to us. Who painted it? At the left-hand corner of the plate the artist's name is legible enough; but there is much

more, besides the name, printed in sympathetic ink which is visible only to the eye of the initiated. A word in thine ear, gentlest of piscatorial readers! The skill of the pencil is the animated reflection of the skill of the fishing rod. Nothing finny has the painter drawn which the angler has not killed. On the canvass his faithful brush has placed nothing which his success as an angler has not enabled him to observe for himself, to mark, and to daguerreotype in his inmost soul. No graceful outline has he traced; no gorgeous bulk has he stretched out in massive breadth or wavy length; no small head has he delicately curved; no, flood of light has he poured on gleaming panoply of interwoven scales of gold and silver; no shifting ray of exquisite colour has he caught in the very instant of brilliant evanescence; no purple spot or crimson star has he made to shine with distinctive brightness on the flank; no aureate or orange tint has he permitted to fade away along the body into pearly whiteness; no fin quivers; no tail curls; no gill is muddy red; no eye is lustreless, – without or beyond the bidding, the teaching, the guarantee, and express image of nature. Pity it is that we should not feel at liberty to say a word or two of other matters – of a happy temper, which has cheered us with its mellow sunshine on many a raw and cloudy day; or of a richly-stored mind, which, when fish were sulky, has often made the lagging hours spin on with jocund speed. Almost, under this hot bright sky, we are tempted, unbidden, to enter the studio, and ask to share with yon sequestered stags the shelter of the favourite pines. But we dare not; for we know the man as well as the artist and angler. We know both the anglers. It is, in sooth, fitting that Giles should illustrate Stoddart.

Is not angling cruel? Now, before attempting any responsive observation, be so good as to read the following impetuous passage: —

> "Is it not, for instance, in the attitude of hope that the angler stands, while in the act of heaving out his flies over some favourite cast? Of hope increased, when he beholds, feeding within reach of his line, the monarch of the stream? But now, mark him! He has dropt the hook cautiously and skilfully just above the indicated spot; the fish, scarcely breaking the surface, has seized it. A fast, firm hold it has, but the tackle is fine, and the trout strong and active. Look! how the expression of his features is undergoing a change. There is still hope, but mingled with it are traces of anxiety – of fear itself. His attitudes, too, are those of a troubled and distempered man. Ha! all is well. The worst is over. The strong push for liberty has been made, and failed. Desperate as that summerset was, it has proved unsuccessful. The tackle – knot and barb – is sufficient. Look now at the angler. Hope with him is stronger than anxiety, and joy too beams forth under his eyelids; for lo! the fish is showing symptoms of distress. No longer it threatens to exhaust the winch-line; no longer it combats with the rapids; no more it strives, with frantic fling or wily plunge, to disengage the hook. It has lost all heart – almost all energy. The fins, paralysed and powerless, are unable for their task. So far from regulating its movements, they cannot even sustain the balance of the fish. Helpless and hopeless it is drawn ashore, upturning, in the act of submission, its starred and gleamy flanks. The countenance of the captor – his movements, (they are those which the soul dictates,) are all joyous and self-congratulatory. But the emotion, strongly depicted though it be, is short-lived. It gives way successively to the feelings of admiration and pity – of admiration, as excited on contemplating the almost incomparable beauty of the captive, its breadth and depth, the harmony of its proportions, as well as the richness and variety of its colours; of pity, as called forth in accordance with our nature, – an unconscious, uncontrollable emotion, which operates with subduing effect on the triumph of the moment.
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> "And now, in their turn, content and thankfulness reign in the heart and develop themselves on the countenance of the angler; now haply he is impressed with feelings of adoring solemnity, stirred up by some scene of unlooked-for

> grandeur, or the transit of some sublime phenomenon. I say nothing of the feelings of disappointment, anger, envy, and jealousy, which sometimes find their way into the bosom, and are portrayed on the features even of the worthiest and best-tempered of our craft. Too naturally they spring up and blend themselves with our better nature; yet well it is that they take no hold on the heart – scorching, it may be true, but not consuming its day of happiness.
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> "Hence it is, from the very variety of emotions which successively occupy the mind, from their blendings and transitions, that angling derives its pleasures; hence it holds precedence as a sport with men of thoughtful and ideal temperament; hence poets, sculptors, and philosophers – the sons and worshippers of genius – have entered, heart and hand, into its pursuit. Therefore it was that Thomson, Burns, Scott, and Hogg, and, in our present day, Wilson and Wordsworth, exchanged eagerly the gray-goose quill and the companionship of books, for the taper wand and the discourse, older than Homer's measures, of streams and cataracts. Therefore it was that Paley left his meditative home, and Davy his tests and crucibles, and Chantrey his moulds, models, and chisel-work, – each and all to rejoice and renovate themselves; to gather new thoughts and energies, a fresh heart and vigorous hand, in the exercise of that pastime which is teeming with philosophy."

Mr Stoddart blinks our problem altogether. Fish, it will be noticed, are treated, firstly, as bits of cork, and, secondly, as lumps of lead. But the bad example of all the great men before or since Agamemnon will not lessen the cruelty, if it be cruelty, of dragging a large fish or a little fish out of its "native element" forcibly, and against its will. Obliging a fish to come out of the water when it has not the slightest wish to be a fish out of water, has an apparent resemblance to the ejecting of a human being unseasonably from his bed who has made up his mind to prosecute a steady snooze for the next three hours. The absence or presence of a little bodily suffering in the process of ejection, has really nothing to do with the merits of the abstract question. A man who is jerked out of bed by a string tied to his toe must endure an uncomfortable twinge. But the votary of Morpheus may be induced to change his quarters quite as effectually by painlessly removing beyond his reach the blankets and the sheets. It is not the application of positive compulsion to the person, but the disturbance of existing comfort in his present condition, which may be pain, and hardship, and cruelty. In point of fact, it is nothing of the sort, because the analogy, as stated, is entirely fallacious. The true analog is to be stated thus: Any body who, being already in bed, and therefore legitimately somniferous, happens to overhear us in the next room loudly declaring our intention of beginning forthwith a supper of savoury and palatable dishes, and who, thereupon, greedily shakes off his incipient torpidity, and rushes into the apartment in order to share the banquet, but finds no supper, and ourselves laughing at his credulity, has no right at all to assert that he has been subjected to hardships or treated with cruelty. He left his proper sphere, and was punished for his eccentricity. How is a fish that lives in the water entitled to snap at a fly that lives out of the water? But then the fly goes into the water. Very well: but if the fish comes up into the air, as it does, to bite at a fly, which is a denizen of the air, it is just that a fly, when it goes down into the water, should indulge in a reciprocal bite at a fish, which is a denizen of the waters. And if flies cannot bite for themselves, it is a noble thing in man to bite for them. All the fish encreeled by all the human fishers of every year make but a molehill to the mountain of flies butchered and gorged by a single trout in a month. Heliogabalus was temperate, Nero was merciful, when compared with a gillaroo. And as for a Pike!

Let us listen to Stoddart on pikes. It is proper, perhaps, to mention that we are legally informed that the "open and advised speaking" of our author about pikes is very constitutional, although very marvellous. It pleases him now to buffet these freshwater sharks with extremely hard words. Yet have we seen his nerves more fluttered by a dead pike, surreptitiously introduced into his nocturnal couch at Tibbie's – whom mortals, we believe, call Mrs Richardson, and whose green rural hostelry, on the

margin of St Mary's Loch, is the sweet and loved haunt of every true brother of the craft – than ever was the heart of fisherman when a twenty-pounder has darted off like an express locomotive towards the foaming and rocky cataract. What horrid shriek is that, making night hideous? With bursts of laughter at this moment returns the scene when that grim visitor murdered the first efforts of the weary angler to woo repose, as his naked feet came into unexpected contact with the slimy mail of the water-pirate. Such recollections are part and parcel of the many hundred things which make the fisher's life a happy one. We shall hear, therefore, Mr Stoddart avenging himself on all pikes, dead or living, not excluding an incidental foray against eels; which latter are not surely, while they live, loveable.

> "No one that ever felt the first attack of a pike at the gorge-bait can easily forget it. It is not, as might be supposed from the character of the fish, a bold, eager, voracious grasp; quite the contrary, it is a slow calculating grip. There is nothing about it dashing or at all violent; no stirring of the fins – no lashing of the tail – no expressed fury or revenge. The whole is mouth-work; calm, deliberate, bone-crashing, deadly mouth-work. You think at the moment you hear the action – the clanging action – of the fish's jaw-bones; and such jaw-bones, so powerful, so terrific! You think you hear the compressing, the racking of the victim betwixt them. The sensation is pleasurable to the angler as an avenger. Who among our gentle craft ever pitied a pike? I can fancy one lamenting over a salmon or star-stoled trout or playful minnow; nay, I have heard of those who, on being bereft of a pet gold-fish, actually wept; but a pike! itself unpitying, unsparing, who would pity? – who spare?
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> "Returning, however, to the point in my narrative at which I broke off. I no sooner felt the well-known intimation, than, drawing out line from my reel, and slightly slackening what had already passed the top-ring of my rod, I stood prepared for further movements on the part of the fish. After a short time he sailed slowly about, confining his excursions to within a yard or two of the spot where he had originally seized the bait. It was evident, as I knew from experience, that he still held the trout cross-wise betwixt his jaws, and had not yet pouched or bolted it. To induce, him, however, to do so without delay, I very slightly, as is my wont, tightened or rather jerked the line towards myself, in order to create the notion that his prey was making resistance, and might escape from his grasp. A moment's halt indicated that he had taken the hint, and immediately afterwards, all being disposed of at one gulp, out he rushed, vigorous as any salmon, exhausting in one splendid run nearly the whole contents of my reel, and ending his exertions, in the meanwhile, with a desperate summerset, which revealed him to my view in all his size, vigour, and ferocity; the jaws grimly expanded, the fins erect, and the whole body in a state of uncontrollable excitement. Being provided with a single-handed rod, and winch-line suited in respect of strength and thickness to light fishing, it was a marvel that either of these stood the test on an occasion so very trying. The worst, however, was over; and although the pike, as fish of its kind under similar circumstances always do, showed signs of remaining strength, coupled with great sullenness, it nevertheless, in the course of a few minutes, submitted to its fate, and allowed itself to be drawn ashore at a convenient landing-place, which fortunately was not far off.
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> "This fish, the first I ever captured in Teviot, weighed nearly a stone, and preceded in its fate no fewer than four others, of the respective weights, or nearly so, of ten, eight, seven, and three pounds, all of which I took from about the same spot in less than an hour's time. Shortly after, three or four days intervening, I killed two pike of twelve pounds weight each, close to the place mentioned, and in the same season met with an incident which, as it has some connexion with pike-trolling, is

worthy of being recorded in this chapter. It happened in the month of July, on which day, Teviot, owing to recent rains, was somewhat discoloured, and I had ventured as far up its banks as the Roxburgh pool, intending to trout with fly and minnow, and also to give the pike a trial. That I might not, however, consume much time upon the latter fish, I had provided myself with a couple of set lines formed of strong cord. These it was my intention to lay out in a portion of the pool hitherto untried, and to allow them to remain there, while I angled for trout higher up the river. With the view of doing this, I had secured, by desultory throwing in my progress, towards Roxburgh, several small trout, and when arriving at the spot where I had intended to lay the lines, was unable to resist an anticipatory trial for pike with the rod itself, which, on this occasion, was a double-handed one, and provided with a good-sized reel and line to correspond.

"Having affixed and baited a gorge-hook, I accordingly commenced operations, and in the course of a few throws hooked what I conceived to be a pike of extraordinary size. It pouched quickly, ran far, and forcibly crossed and recrossed the river, which, at the spot in question, is by no means narrow, – rushed upwards to a distance of at least a hundred yards and down again, seemingly without the least fatigue. Having regained, however, the spot from which it had commenced its run, all on a sudden the fish halted, and immediately, without any jerk or strain on my part, the line came to hand, neatly severed or cut through by the teeth, above the wire-fastenings to which the gorge-hook had been appended. No slight disappointment it was. I fancied of course that I had lost a pike of such uncommon size, as to have been able to engross, in pouching, the whole extent of arming in question, measuring nearly a foot. My sole resource therefore, or hope of retrieve, – and I was by no means sanguine of the result, – lay in the setting of the two lines I had brought along with me, at or near the spot where the fish had made its escape. Accordingly, baiting each with a trout of at least four ounces in weight, I threw them in not far from one another, with small floats attached, in order to show off the lure and keep it from the bottom. This done, I pursued my way further up the river, and commenced trouting. On my return, after the expiry of two or three hours, to the place where I had set the lines, I found that both the corks were out of sight and the cords stretched to the uttermost, but quite motionless. Drawing the nearer one, I was surprised to observe it, although made of strong and fresh material, snapped through at the middle. It was not so, however, with the other. There was evidently something attached to it of considerable weight and bulk, without, however, any live resistance. Imagine my surprise, when, on hauling it nearer the bank, I beheld a huge eel enveloped among the cords, quite choked and lifeless. Of river eels it was the largest I had ever witnessed, although I certainly have seen congers of greater size. About four feet and a half in length, and in girth fully eleven inches, I think it could not have weighed less than twenty pounds. This point, however, I wanted the ready means of determining, although I regret not having made an effort to acquaint myself with it. On examining the stomach of the monster, I found that it contained all the three gorge-hooks employed by me, and the trouts with which, individually, they had been baited. My experience in eel fishing has not been very great, but I have taken some hundreds of them in my time, and I do not remember above one or two that showed fight in the same manner this one did, while on the rod. In general, they waddle or twist about, betake themselves under rocks, stones, or roots of trees, but very seldom push out directly across or up the pool. With the gorge-hook indeed, and a small trout as the bait, I have often, both before and since the occasion above-mentioned,

> captured them; also while trolling for pike with gimp and swivel tackle, and that in mid water betwixt the bottom and surface; nor, indeed, will eels, when impelled by hunger, shrink from assailing the largest fish, should these happen to be sickly or in adverse circumstances. It is well known that what are termed river cairns, or heaps of stones raised by the tacksman of salmon fishings for the purpose of inveigling running fish into a certain description of net attached to them, afford shelter to large numbers of eels and lampreys, which, if the grilse or salmon happening to become entangled is allowed, through neglect or otherwise, to continue two or three hours in this state of thraldom, will, forcing an entrance through the gill or mouth, speedily disencumber it of its entrails; nay if allowed to pursue their work of molestation unchecked, absolutely hollow it out, until little remains but a sack or skinful of bones."

This is a horrible picture, – "a sack or skinful of bones," while the salmon, we presume, still exists in its ribbed transparency. The dreams of eels, who sup so full of horrors, must be very awful. But infinitely more awful must be the visions which people the slumbers of those mortals who, in their turn, eat those eels who have eaten those salmon. Our repugnance to eel-pies was never strong. It were better for us to think of something else.

A crust of statistics may ward off sickening and remorseful qualms. The indiscriminate destructiveness which characterises pikes, is unfortunately and disgracefully displayed by other queer fish. It is not necessary to enumerate the perplexing multiplicity of devices which human ingenuity has invented and constructed for annihilating salmon. As of the kings about whose deaths their royal brother Richard tells sad stories, so of salmon, however various may be the manner of their dissolutions, it is safe to affirm that they are "all murdered." Statutes kill myriads of them; poachers, in spite of statutes, kill myriads more of them; honest anglers, who sport in the seasons, and with the weapons proper to sportsmen, kill a few individual fishes; and it will be demonstrated that pikes are the powerful and natural allies of statutes and poachers: —

> "With regard to the ravages committed among the fry of the salmon, I may mention that almost every pike captured by me during the months of April and May contained in its stomach, or disgorged, on being landed, the remains of one or more smolts. These frequently were quite entire – to all appearance, indeed, newly killed; they were sometimes also in a partly-digested state, and on other occasions presented to the eye little more than was sufficient to distinguish them as having been small fish. I have taken five or six salmon-fry, in the stages above described, out of the stomach of a single pike. Two, three, or four, is a matter of common occurrence. Such being the case, and if it be true, what many ichthyologists affirm, that fish dissolve their food with such astonishing rapidity as to rival in some instances the action of fire; nay, allowing that the stomach of the pike occupied a couple of hours in completing the digestive process, the amount of havoc committed by this ravager on Teviot during the smolt season is quite astonishing. Confining my calculation within very moderate bounds, I shall presume that each pike, on the average, as his daily meal, during the months already referred to, engrosses four salmon or bull-trout fry. This, in the course of sixty days, gives an allowance to every individual in Teviot of two hundred and forty smolts; and supposing there are from Ancrumbridge downward, a stretch of water nine or ten miles in length, not more than one thousand pike, the entire number consumed by these, in less than one-sixth of the year, amounts to two hundred and forty thousand, or nearly a quarter of a million of salmon-fry, – a greater number, there is no question, than is killed during the same extent of time by all the angling poachers in the district put together."

We acknowledge that we must be indiscreet to involve ourselves again in an offensive topic. A hint, however, of our opinion, and we pass away from the subject. The abominable slaughter of "FOUL" fish, perpetrated by people whom we are obliged to repudiate as sportsmen, and whom we are not obliged to recognise as gentlemen, is a shocking, dirty, disreputable mal-practice, to be condemned with unmodified severity of language. Apologies, explanations, palliations, are in vain. The filthy mass which is unrighteously dragged out of the water is not then a fish. It is against the use of nature for the hand of man to touch it. And yet the same man who would with easy indifference "leister" a salmon in that state, teeming with ten thousand thousand lives, shall, on the morrow, in a jury-box, violate his oath by acquitting the guilty in the face of the clearest evidence, because he thinks capital punishments unlawful. Phaugh! Call Mr Stoddart into court as an authoritative witness.

> "I find a number of anglers at one with me in opinion upon this subject; and all who have witnessed night-leistering on Tweed during the autumnal or winter months, will acknowledge that even the romantic character which torch-light and scenery invest it with, fails as an apology for the ignoble, wasteful, and injurious nature of the occupation. In nine cases out of ten, it is pursued, either during the spawning season itself, or when the fish are heavy with roe – when they are red or foul, having lain a considerable time in the river, and, moreover, when they have lost all power of escape, or are cut off from exercising it, both by the lowness of water, and by the circumstance of their being hemmed in, at the head and foot of the pool or place of action, by nets and other contrivances stretched from bank to bank.
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> "It can scarcely be credited, but I relate a fact known to many on Tweedside, that, about four or five years ago, upwards of three hundred breeding fish, salmon and grilses, were slaughtered in the course of a single night, from one boat, out of a stretch of water not far from Melrose, two leisters only being employed; and of this number – I allude to the fish – scarcely one was actually fit to be used as food, while by far the greater part of them were female salmon, on the eve of depositing their ova. In the neighbourhood of Kelso, upwards of ninety have frequently been butchered with this implement during a single night, from one boat, – all of them fish in the same rank and unhealthy condition above described. In September 1846, according to the most moderate calculation, no fewer than four thousand spawning fish, consisting chiefly of full-grown salmon, and comprehending the principal breeding stock of the season – those fish which, from their forward state, promised the earliest and most vigorous supply of fry, were slaughtered in Tweed, with the consent, and under the auspices, of the upper holders of fishings, in the manner I speak of. Need it be said, that the injury done to the salmon-fishings in general by this malpractice on the part of two or three lesser proprietors, is incalculable, and, when linked with the doings of poachers during closetime, to which it unquestionably gives encouragement, and the system pursued on Tweed of capturing and destroying the kelts and baggits, it must operate most prejudicially against every plan devised to further the breeding of this highly-prized article of food."

Simply we shall say, that any body who so leisters fish from this day forward is a BRUTAL BARBARIAN, fit for the society of a Burke or a Hare, who did not venture to immolate their victims till gross physical corruption – the heavy prostration of drunkenness – rendered them in general the easy and stupid prey of a disgusting assassin. Let the leisterer of foul fish be accursed in the sporting calendar.

Under all circumstances, to be quite candid, we remonstrate against the leister. It is not a fair way of going to work – the fish has no option. There is too much of the tinge of the Venetian bravo

in the blow. Less apology must there always be for striking a salmon than for striking a man behind his back. The man who detects the stealthy thrust may turn and smite his enemy. The fish, vigilant happily of the descending trident, can but shift its quarters and swim away. Basking, too, at the moment under the broad beam of the all-rejoicing sun – as motionless, as tranquil, as bright, and as beautiful, as the silver pebbles in the river's bed – why should idle human violence invade and extinguish that unsuspecting repose? At this very instant, while he is in such attitude and mood, fling, if you can, with delicate precision, over his snout the most attractive mottled wing in your book, and then – if the pensive Zoroaster of the stream quits his meditations to swallow your temptation – then hook him, play him, land him, and encreel him; but do not, without any warning, plunge a barbed steel fork into his heart. Or, at this very instant, let the seduction of the triple worm travel athwart his ruminations, and if the glutton shall overcome the sage, then, even in his voracious throat, strike home, and overcome the glutton; but do not hack the noble form with ruffianly prongs of rusty iron —

"Let's carve him as a dish fit for the gods,
Not hew him as a carcass fit for hounds."

Pr'ythee permit the leister, for the future, to decorate a museum along with other implements of the Cannibal, not the British islands!

Mr Stoddart must feel neither anger nor surprise if we deliberately avoid not merely any discussion, but even any notice whatever, of theories or speculations, directly or collaterally referring to the breeding or propagation of fishes. We have not been, as the pages of Maga prove, unwatchful of what conjectural philosophy might propose, or ingenious experimentalism might exhibit. We hold some piscine opinions, so curious but so true, that if we could enunciate them in a language intelligible to fish (which ought to be the Finnish dialect,) the liveliest salmon in Norway could not execute summersets sufficiently numerous to express his astonishment at our knowledge. We could likewise put such puzzling objections to the most elaborate and seemingly satisfactory systems, as to demonstrate irrefragably that, in spite of every thing which every body has said about every variety of the *salmo* race, nobody knows any thing certain as to the age Of Old Parr. But, for one good reason, we shall be discreet and silent. Nobody cares a straw, or a horse-hair, or a thread of gut, whether Stoddart is overthrown, or Shaw is predominant, – nobody, whose sole and laudable object is to enjoy a day's good fishing. The great fact remains – the waters are full of fish. What matter is it whence the fins came or come? The question is not how they got into, but how they are to be taken out of the burn, the river, or the lake? It is not we who mean to go

"Under the glassy, cool, translucent wave;"

but up out of it we hope to draw many dozens of its peopling swarms. And we desire to learn from Mr Stoddart how best we may, by baits and guileful spells, reach and inveigle, them —

"In their obscured haunts of inmost bowers."

The companion we want is the Angler's Companion. Now the angler is an individual who sallies out at early dawn, rejoicing, not only in his own strength, and, haply, the strength of a glass of whisky, but in a fishing-basket, or pannier, or bag; in a fishing-rod, or three or four fishing-rods; in a fishing-book, more voluminous in its single volume than the Encyclopædia Britannica; in wading boots and water-proof cloaklets; in a reel, and a gaff, and a landing net, and sometimes a boat; in gut, and in horse hair; in hooks and hackles; in feathers and silk thread; in wax and wire; in leads and floats; in tin boxes of worms, and earthen pots of salmon roe; in minnows, and parr-tails; in swivels and gorge-hooks; in lobs, and in bobs; in ferrules, and in rings; in a brown paper parcel of four large sandwiches,

and a pocket flask of six large glasses of sherry; in a dingy coat, and inexpressible unmentionables; and finally, in the best humour, and a shocking bad hat. Is it imaginable that all this can be done, as it is done every day, by any body who has not made up his mind, or who thinks it necessary to know, what fish are, and where they came from? There is no such humbug within him. He goes to the Tweed or the Tay; the Don, or the Conan; to Loch Craggie, or Loch Maree; to Loch Awe, or Loch Etive; to the Clyde, or the Solway; to Loch Doon, or Loch Ken; because all over broad Scotland there is plenty of fish; and because, where-ever he goes, Stoddart can tell him how there most readily, most surely, and most pleasantly to encreel them. Of all the Caledonians who, in countless crowds, daily leave their native homes in the flesh, and return to the domestic hearthstone in the evening, with their flesh more or less fishified, there are not twenty to whom it is not a point of the utmost indifference, whether the fish in the Tweed, or any other river where they have been angling, are rained down once a month from the clouds, or are brought over as ballast in ships once a-week from Denmark. The fish are there. We are going to catch them. Hand us Stoddart's Angler's Companion.

As a teacher of practical angling in Scotland, we look on Mr Stoddart to be without a rival or equal. To call him a good instructor in the art, does not properly describe him. He is strictly and literally a manuductor. Nature has given to him what Beddoes terms "a well organised and very pliant hand," which for more than twenty years, as we can honestly testify, has waved the osier over all the streams of his native country. We exaggerate nothing in declaring angling to have been, during that long period, Stoddart's diurnal and nocturnal study. And the result has been what it ought to be. Nobody else, for example, (we affirm it without fear of any contradiction or cavil,) could have written, as it is written, the sixth chapter, – "On fishing with the worm for trout."

> "To a perfect novice in the art of angling, nothing appears simpler than to capture trout with the worm, provided the water be sufficiently muddled to conceal the person and disguise the tackle of the craftsman. A mere urchin, with a pea-stick for a wand, a string for his line, and a pin for his hook, has often, under such favourable circumstances, effected the landing of a good-sized fish. But to class performances of this description among feats of skill were quite ridiculous, and they are just, to as small an extent, samples of successful worm-fishing. It may perhaps startle some, and these no novices in the art, when I declare, and offer moreover to prove, that worm-fishing for trout requires essentially more address and experience, as well as a better knowledge of the habits and instincts of the fish, than fly-fishing. I do not, be it observed, refer to the practice of this branch of the art as it is followed on hill burns and petty rivulets, neither do I allude to it as pursued after heavy rains in flooded and discoloured waters; my affirmation bears solely upon its practice as carried on during the summer months in the southern districts of Scotland, when the rivers are clear and low, the skies bright and warm. Then it is, and then only, that it ought to be dignified with the name of sport; and sport it assuredly is, fully as exciting, perhaps more so, than angling with the fly or minnow. In the hands of a skilful practitioner, indeed, there is no mode of capturing well-conditioned fish with the rod more remunerative; – I say well-conditioned, for in the spawning months, lean, lank, and unhealthy trout may be massacred in any number by means of salmon-roe or pastes formed from that substance.
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> "In the present chapter, I shall attempt to make plain the principal points to be attended to by the worm-fisher desirous of success. These I class under the following heads: —
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> 1. The rod and tackle to be employed.
> 2. The kind of worm, and how prepared,
> 3. When and where to fish.

4. How to bait and manage the line."

Excellently well is the task executed. At the conclusion of the chapter, when he says "I have embraced, methinks, most of the points connected with the subject it treats of, and endeavoured, to the best of my ability, to set them forth in a plain and practical light," he speaks with the modest but honest consciousness of one who has been handling a subject so familiar, and yet so interesting to himself, that if he has only allowed words to clothe his thoughts as they flowed in their natural stream, he feels he must have written clearly, sensibly, agreeably, and usefully. Mind you, we do not intend to reprint Mr Stoddart's volume in these pages. Buy it and read it. But, as we rebuked at starting those who spoke of the spring of 1847, we shall not withhold at once comfort and advice from precipitate anglers, who fancy they cannot commence operations too early in the season.

> "On Tweedside, worm-fishing seldom commences until the latter end of May or beginning of June, when the main stream and its tributaries are in ordinary seasons considerably reduced. The trout in a certain measure require to be sated with fly-food before having recourse to any coarser aliment, – at any rate, some change seems to be effected in their tastes and habits, virtually inexplicable, but yet dependent upon the instinct implanted by nature – an instinct which, as regards many animals, has, in all ages, baffled, perplexed, and silenced the minutest inquiry. Before trout take the worm freely, it is necessary also that the temperature of the water should be at a state of considerable elevation – at least fifty degrees of Fahrenheit; and, moreover, that it be acted upon at the time by a fair proportion of sun-light; indeed, a bright hot day is not at all objectionable, the air being calm, or but slightly agitated. Such a condition both of water and weather often occurs during the month of June, and its occurrence is, indeed, frequently protracted throughout July. These, in fact – June and July, added to the latter half of May – constitute, as regards the southern districts of Scotland, our best worm-fishing months. Be it noted, however, by way of repetition, that I am not at present alluding to the simple and coarse practice of the art pursued among starved and unwary fish in mountain rivulets, nor do I refer to worm-fishing in flooded and discoloured streams; but I treat of it solely as respects clear waters, inhabited by cunning, cautious trout, and, in consequence, as a method of angling which requires of the craftsman great skill and no stinted amount of prudence. With regard to hill burn-fishing, undoubtedly it is more in season during August and September, when rains are frequent, than in June and July; and in discoloured waters, trout may be captured with worm throughout the whole year, no one month excepted."

Precocity does not flourish in Scotland. Never do any thing in a hurry. In good time for all good purposes of angling, – not too soon, but not a minute too late, have come our commendations of this admirable treatise and manual. What does it lack? any thing? no, not even a "SIMPLE RECIPE FOR COOKING A WHITLING OR GOOD TROUT BY THE RIVER-SIDE." What a smack there is here of inimitable and beloved Isaac! But, before we part, Mr Stoddart shall pronounce his benison.

> "Angler! that all day long hast wandered by sunny stream, and heart and hand plied the meditative art – who hast filled thy pannier brimful of star-sided trout, and with aching arms, and weary back, and faint wavering step, crossed the threshold of some cottage inn – a smiling, rural retreat that starts up when thy wishes are waning into despondency, – how grateful to thee is the merry song of the frying-pan, strewn over with the daintiest of thy spoils, and superintended by a laughter-loving hostess and her blooming image! and thou, too, slayer of salmon! more matured and fastidious, what sound when thy reel is at rest, like the bubbling and frothing of the fish-kettle! what fare more acceptable than the shoulder-cut, snowed over

> with curd, of a gallant sixteen-pounder; and where, in the wide world, is to be found wholesomer and heartier sauce, to the one as well as to the other, than a goblet generously mixed of Islay, and piping hot? Stretch thy hand over thy mercies, and be thankful."

Indispensable in all time to come, as the very strength and grace of an angler's Tackle and Equipment in Scotland, must and will be "Stoddart's Angler's Companion."

THE CAXTONS. – PART III

BOOK II. – CHAPTER I

It was a beautiful summer afternoon when the coach set me down at my father's gate. Mrs Primmins herself ran out to welcome me; and I had scarcely escaped from the warm clasp of her friendly hand, before I was in the arms of my mother.

As soon as that tenderest of parents was convinced that I was not famished, seeing that I had dined two hours ago at Dr Herman's, she led me gently across the garden towards the arbour. "You will find your father so cheerful," said she, wiping away a tear. "His brother is with him."

I stopped. *His*

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.