

# BACCALAUREATE,

BY

ANDREW WYLIE, D. D.

PRESIDENT OF INDIANA UNIVERSITY,

ADDRESSED TO THE SENIOR CLASS,

AT THE LATE COMMENCEMENT,

September, 1841.

BLOOMINGTON, INDIANA.

DEAL & BOLLMANN, PTS.

MDCCCXLI.

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THE nations of the world have, now for about a quarter of a century, reposed in the enjoyment of universal peace. The predictions of ancient prophecy seem to be receiving their fulfilment: "Nation shall not lift up sword against nation; neither shall they learn war any more." The spear has been beaten into the pruning-hook and the sword into the plough-share, and that vast amount of human energy, which, before this period, had been employed in the destruction of life and the means by which life is sustained, is now directed into the channels of productive industry and employed in cultivating the useful arts. Besides, there has been a vast augmentation of the power of machinery as applied to all these arts. Peace has added to the number of laborers; and art has multiplied the contrivances whereby the labor of human hands has been saved and superseded. Thus, by a double operation, has Peace increased the power of production: increasing the number of producers and at the same time augmenting the efficiency of every one of the number.

Nor is this the whole of the matter. For, while labor has thus become more productive, the demand for its products has been diminished. And that in two ways: multitudes of soldiers and others employed about the business of war, have gone over from the class of consumers into that of producers, and, the waste occasioned by the ravages of war having ceased, a less amount of products is required to keep up the supply.

Besides all this, we must take into account the consumption in war of that various and immense mass of articles which war only uses, and which, as they are not needed, are not produced, in peace. For war is not only a mighty destroyer but a great and rapid consumer. The monster not only burns, demolishes and devastates; not only tramples down and swallows up the fruits of the earth and the products of the loom, but with his bloody hands breaks and consumes the means and implements with which he carries on the work of destruction. When Peace comes, his death-dealing instruments and his death-disguising



trumpery, are all laid aside. Blessed messenger of pitying Heaven! "She breaks the bow, cuts asunder the spear and burns the chariot in the fire," consigns to the rust the warrior's plumed helmet and coat of mail, and to the moth his stained banner with all his gorgeous trappings.

This peaceful period has also been remarkably favored by the blessings of Providence in other respects. Except for the few months when the cholera prevailed, it has been a season of health beyond what is common. God has not left himself without this further "witness" during this period, in that he has sent to the people of both continents "rain and fruitful seasons." But the quotation cannot be with truth completed by adding "filling their hearts with food and gladness;" for notwithstanding the concurrence of so many causes all tending to produce prosperity and plenty, the voice of complaint has seldom been more loud or more general, both in Europe and in this country, than for the last twenty-five years. People, indeed, are apt to be querulous and dissatisfied with the present. But, in this case, the general lamentation, is not without a cause. That a grievous amount of distress has, of late, fallen on a large portion of our fellow-citizens, is undeniable. Few, indeed, of that useful and enterprising class of the community, who have been engaged in trade or manufacture, have escaped the general embarrassment. Vast numbers have become bankrupt, who were once doing a lucrative and prosperous business. Some of them are languishing in prison, confined there by the rage of disappointed creditors. Credit is gone, and the arm of industry palsied. And, what is calculated to awaken a feeling of still deeper concern in every one that has a heart to sympathize with the sufferings of others, or to feel solicitude for the general interests of humanity, is that the instances of outrage committed, in violation of the peace and good order of society, upon the life, person and property of individuals, as well as of fraud and defalcation upon the public, have become so alarmingly frequent, as to show, that, either a deep depravation of public morals has taken place, which we may well consider portentous, or that there exists some radical defect in the organization of society itself, which, unless a remedy be applied in time, must ultimately effect its dissolution.

On the eastern continent, the general discontent is still deeper and more general. And certainly it there proceeds from a more adequate cause, that deplorable state of depression to which the

entire class of operatives is there sunk, to which nothing can be compared in this country, not even in the lanes and alleys of our great cities, where occasionally may be seen instances of squalid poverty, which in the country at large are wholly unknown.

By way of specimen, I will here state a few facts which I have taken from a work lately published in Boston. I refer to "Brisbane's Outline of Fourier's System of Association, and plan for a re-organization of Society."

"In the city of London, there are two hundred and thirty-two thousand beggars, thieves, pick-pockets and vagrants. In Paris, there is nearly an equal degree of poverty, vice, and degradation.

"In France, out of a population of thirty-two millions, twenty-two millions have but six cents a day to defray all expenses, food, clothing, and education. In the southern part of France, eight millions of persons live on chesnuts and such trash. Their lives are one ceaseless combat against physical want. In some of the provinces, the peasants are so poor that they have no beds.

"In Ireland, out of a population of eight millions of inhabitants, every third person experiences, during thirty weeks of the year, a deficiency of even third-rate potatoes. At present, in Great Britain, there are four millions of workmen out of employment, half starved and reduced to despair.

"According to the journal of the Statistical Society of January, 1840, there are in Liverpool seven thousand, eight hundred and sixty-two inhabited cellars, damp, dark, dirty and ill ventilated; and in these lodge thirty-nine thousand, three hundred and nine of the working class. In Manchester, of one hundred and thirty-two thousand, two hundred and thirty-two working people, fourteen thousand, nine hundred and sixty live in cellars. In Bristol, forty-six out of every hundred of the working classes, have but one room for a family.

"In Glasgow, thirty thousand Irish and Highlanders are said, according to the description of Dr. Cowan, to wallow in filth, crime and wretchedness. From ten to twenty lie huddled together, in their rags and filth, on the floor each night. Multitudes of young girls, says Mr. Symonds, applied to Capt. Miller, the head of the Glasgow police, to rescue them from these scenes, to which they were driven by want.

"The Register General states that he has seen in one small garret, the husband sick of a typhus; a sick child laid across a



sick man's bed; two others sleeping under the bed; the two window-recesses let to two Irish lodgers at sixpence a week, as resting places for the night; the wife, a young healthy woman, lying in the same bed with her sick husband at night, and supporting the family by taking in washing, which was hung across the room to dry, the Parish authorities having forbidden the exposition of linen out of the windows."

After referring to the condition of the slave population in this country, he goes on to say that "Thousands of children are growing up in our large cities, in ignorance, vice and degradation, and that it is from among these poor creatures, who are deprived of the right which they are entitled to demand from society—the right of education—that go forth the depredators upon society, the inmates of our prisons and the victims of the scaffold:" and he then adds: "If we wish a single external sign of the miseries and depravity which a large city contains, we have but to remark that New York has fourteen hundred grog shops, which are well supported. Reflect, for a moment, what an ocean of moral degradation, of idleness, profligacy and desperation, it must require to sustain them."

Facts of a still more shocking description than these, might be readily gathered from the most respectable sources; but these are sufficient to show that the condition of the laboring classes, in those countries where they are of ordinary occurrence, must be miserable indeed. And serious apprehension seems to be entertained by some among us, that we as a people are fast following these countries in their downward career to wretchedness and degradation.

The principle which makes men take an interest in whatever concerns their brethren of the human race, is a holy principle; strongest in the best, liveliest in the noblest and purest: and it ought to be respected even when it goes astray.

I feel, therefore, no disposition severely to criticise the Theories of Reform, which have been recently proposed with a view to mitigate, and if possible remove, the evils under which so great a portion of the human race continue to groan. Some of these theories are, indeed, so extravagant in absurdity, that it is hard to conceive how they could have originated in a mind not deranged. Yet they find advocates, able ones too, in their way, who by their reiterated and fervid appeals, are making an impression on the public mind. Who can tell but the next step may be an attempt to risk the consequences of an actual exper-

iment. Experiments, indeed, have been already made on some of these theories, and with the most benevolent intentions. Some of them have failed, producing of course a loss of time and property, and peace of mind, to those engaged in them. Others are in progress. How they will turn out, so far as it respects the majority of those concerned in them, it is not difficult to foresee. But when once a people get into the spirit of experimenting, they are not to be discouraged by failures. Every failure will be imputed, not to the wrong principle of the experiment, but to something in the mode: and as modes are innumerable, the field for experimenting has no limits, except what patience draws around it. And these are often wide and large. How long was it, and with what an expenditure of blood and treasure, that Europe continued, though always baffled, to repeat the experiment of the crusades? How often did the Parisians repeat their experiments during the reign of terror! And the Alchymists theirs, equally foolish, though not so cruel! And,—when will the experiment for finding a perpetual motion cease entirely from the world? Would! that this system of experimenting, could be confined to such projects as the perpetual motion, and to such materials as blocks of wood and bars of iron! Oh! it is terrible to think what it has done when admitted into the region of spirit; where hearts, souls, minds, are the materials to be experimented on; and where keen anguish, dark prejudice, grovelling sentiment and infernal passion are evolved in the process, and poison, worse than that of the cabro de capello, is generated in, and mixed up with, all the elements of human comfort.

Not that all experiment should be laid aside. In conjunction and co-operation with the laws of nature, there cannot be too much experiment: without this condition, there cannot be too little.

Respecting all such Associations as that proposed by Fourier and Brisbane, by which it is hoped to effect a cure of the evils and vices which belong to society under its present organization, I have but one remark to make, and it is this: that the scheme is impracticable. And for this reason, that an investment of some three or four hundred thousand dollars must be made in the first place. Now, who have we rich enough and bold enough to make it? Can a Company be raised who will make it a joint-stock concern? Not till some examples can be produced of joint-stock companies in our country, whose stock holders have



not somehow been managed out of their stock; or till by some means that confidence which people once had in the integrity of each other shall be restored.

My object, however, at present, is not to discuss the merits of any particular plan for the improvement of the condition of any class of people in the community; but to suggest to your consideration some of those laws established by nature herself, which govern man's social existence. It is by a reference to these laws, that all other laws and plans for improving the condition of social life must be tested; and it is by a strict adherence to them only, that you can hope to render your future lives useful and happy.

The first of these which I shall mention is the law of labor. The necessity for labor is laid in man's constitution and in his relation to the circumstances which surround him.

The conditions of individual happiness have been well expressed in the known formula, "*sana mens in corpore sano*;" a sound state of mind and body. The Author of nature has decreed that neither of these conditions can exist without labor, or where labor is excessive. The decree is written in our physical constitution, and read in the experience of every generation. Much, perhaps the greatest portion, of the evils of life, men bring on themselves and on society, in their vain attempts to shun the operation of this two-fold law. To avoid labor they labor excessively; deprive themselves of rest in the pursuit of ease; and deny themselves the pleasures of health and a good conscience, by resorting to unfair expedients for gaining the fancied joys of indolence and sensuality.

The portion of life which can be devoted to labor, is in an inverse proportion to the amount of skill and talent which it requires in the performer. Rough labor most boys are capable of performing at the age of sixteen: whereas few, even of such as possess a sufficiency of native talent, with the best advantages of education, can be suitably qualified for any kind of public or professional business, without an additional ten years of preparatory toil.

The kind and amount of labor required, will always be determined by the condition of society. In a savage state, the stronger sex has but two kinds of employment, hunting and war; agriculture, what little of it may be thought necessary, being left to the weaker. The pastoral state, which next succeeds, adds to these employments that of tending and training domes-



ticated animals. In that state of advanced civilization, which follows next in order, new employments, in great number and variety, start into existence. By means of these a dense population grows up in close vicinage, which brings the interests of individuals in danger of frequent collision. The more so, as these interests are, in the progress of things, necessarily extended and multiplied. Laws, therefore, must be multiplied and liberty abridged. Questions of right, obligation and expediency arise. Legislation becomes a science. The powers of reflection, reason and conscience, in man's nature, are called into exercise. But, temptation to violate the laws of propriety and fair dealing becomes strong and frequent; so that some new force is found to be necessary to prevent it from becoming universally prevalent. In strong governments, such a form is sought for in the severe penalties of law: in such as are weak, it can be supplied only by a purer law of public sentiment.

On a review of these few and simple maxims, all of them embraced in the law I have mentioned, we clearly see that there inevitably results from its operation a certain inequality in the condition of men. The inequality may be too great: but in some degree, it must take place: nature has decreed it. Facts, such as those cited in the beginning of this discourse, show that in some countries this inequality has become too great. And in these countries it has become apparently so firmly fixed in the organization of society itself, as to operate on the lower classes, as they are called, with the weight of a most urgent and pressing necessity, sinking them down to a point of degradation, from which it seems impossible for any of them to rise, their energies being strained through life to the utmost tension in one continued battle with absolute starvation. "Hungry ruin," as Burns has expressed it—"hungry Ruin has them in the wind," sure to overtake the hindmost of their ranks at least, and devour them, generation after generation.

By the way, let me here remark, that the case of those unhappy people across the water to which I have adverted, can never find a parallel in any of our free states—nor, I verily believe, in the condition of the slaves themselves—so long as the grand principles of our Federal Constitution are maintained inviolate.

Here labor is in demand, and meets with an adequate reward. A man can, even now when a general embarrassment prevails, earn enough in the course of a single year to purchase eighty

acres of land. The wages of another year will be sufficient to procure him the implements of farming. So that, at the commencement of the third year, he may be ready to cultivate a farm which he can call his own, and which, with moderate labor and good management, will yield him the means of a comfortable subsistence for himself, and some one else who may, in the mean time, have given her consent to become a partner in the concern.

In such a state of things, how perfectly ridiculous are the complaints which we sometimes hear respecting the oppression of the working classes; complaints, which, however reasonable in other countries, are here without any foundation in fact. And, it is curious to observe, that these complaints are usually made, not by the working classes themselves, nor by those who manifest in deeds of charity the most sympathy for them; but by the persons, who are of all people in the community the most notorious for idleness and selfishness; busy bodies, who hope to profit by the envy and discontent which they wish to awaken in the minds of their fellow citizens.

We have no working classes here, in the sense in which that invidious phrase is employed in England. All belong to the one working class among us, except such as cannot work and such as will not. The former, I mean the very young, the sick, the aged and infirm, are, as they ought to be, supported and comforted by the assistance of others. As to the latter, I mean vagrants, thieves, gamblers, agitators, and all such characters, the community would soon be relieved of their incumbrance, were they left, as they ought to be, to the operation of the rule for such cases made and provided by Apostolic authority.

Another law of social life requires that labor be divided and that there be a gradation of employments. This arises in part from the multiplication of human wants, which follows an increase of population, and in part from the economy of nature in the constitution of the species. Of the two employments, war and hunting, which it was before said belong to the savage state, the latter only is productive. Hence the inhabitants of a country must be few, so long as it remains in the savage state. But when agriculture, manufactures and commerce have opened up their multiplied spheres of useful industry, a vast increase of population will fill the country, and the progressive development which the human capacity undergoes in such circumstances will manifest itself in an enlargement of the desires; and new



wants will be created: and in order to supply these wants there will be a demand for kinds of labor unknown before. And this is not a matter for regret, but rejoicing. For the amount of enjoyment of which any creature is capable is to be estimated by the number of its wants, provided always that the adequate supply be within the scope of its powers. The rule holds, from the zoophyte, which wants nothing but brine, through all the gradations of animal life, up to man, whose wants are boundless: it holds no less in relation to the several states in which man has been known to exist, from the ignorant and uncultivated savage, whose wants are supplied when he has feasted on the animal he has slain and clothed himself with its skin, to the refined voluptuary who is not satisfied unless he has at his command the choicest of all the products of land and sea, river and lake and air, and of all the climates, and of all the arts; or the sage philosopher, who is happy only when he can have access to all the treasures of thought which are stored in books, and the use of all that magnificent variety of apparatus which has been invented with a view to further investigations into the mysteries of nature. Now, in the supplying of those products which go to satisfy that immense variety of wants which human nature feels in the state of its highest cultivation, it must necessarily happen that a corresponding diversity of talent and skill should be required. And the price paid for the labor which is demanded ought, in every case, to be in a compound ratio of the degree of talent and skill which the labor requires and the amount of advantage which society at large may expect to reap from its products. And if people will violate this rule, founded as it manifestly is on reason and nature, let not the organization of society bear the blame of the ill consequences which are sure to follow. We would almost be willing to compromise the matter with the public, allowing them to reward rare talents and skill without insisting on the resulting advantage; or advantageous labors, without saying any thing about the talent and skill, provided they would not violate at once both parts of the rule, by conferring high rewards on kinds of labor which are both foolish and pernicious.

Let such as can afford it pay as high as they please for the skill displayed by Paganini in moving his fingers, or for the perhaps equally rare dexterity of Fanny Essler in managing the muscles which command the opposite extremities; or let them, (what they are not so apt to do) give princely wages to the hon-

est scavenger, whose labor, though it requires no skill, is transcendent in utility, as it prevents the city from the visitations of plague and pestilence; but let them not reward with votes or pay, the employment—labor it cannot be called—by which the vice of vices prolific, the source of almost every other outrage against society—is propagated and extended through the world—I say, let them not reward such a vice as this, and then complain of the organization of society. The pauperism of England, much as we are told of its horrors, and doubtless they are great and many, is owing not wholly to the aristocratical organization of society, but in part at least, perhaps chiefly, to intemperance and the vices which it produces.

Were people introduced into life full grown, and a generation at a time, like the fruits of our orchards, a gradation in their employments might possibly be prevented, and all might be maintained for some time in a condition of perfect equality. As it is, this is impossible. We pass through the dusty vale of mortality like a file of soldiers on the march. Some have got the advantage of us, as it respects their condition and acquirements, only because they got the start of us by being introduced into life sooner than we. The lad who is vexed when he thinks that others, older than himself by a score of years, should enjoy the use of property from which he is debarred, quarrels with the law of nature which ordains that every man shall be by some years younger than his father. He might, however, be induced to submit more patiently to the law, were he to reflect that nature has acted both wisely and impartially in the matter; and that, as those whom he now envies have the advantage of him, because, having lived longer, they have had longer time in which to improve their condition, so, in his turn, when he shall have arrived at the point which they are now passing, he will have, in the same respect, the advantage of others. Possibly, however, when that time shall come he may look back upon these others, with as much dissatisfaction as he now feels while looking at the supposed advantages of those who have gone before: for then he will find, that, in proportion as time has added to his possessions, it has taken away from his strength, his alacrity and relish of enjoyment, and that, by enlarging his experience, it has opened up to him, and in him, new sources of anxiety and grief. Impatience often makes fools of mankind, especially of the young. They would anticipate the action of time, and accomplish by some short process the work of years. They forget,



that in the war with necessity which through life man is doomed to wage, it is of more importance to go into the conflict well equipped and provided, than to enter it soon; and that he is more likely to win the day who is not in haste to sound the charge till he has learned his tactics and looked well to his armor.

The most obvious distinction between the different kinds of labor, is that which arises from the different degrees of talent requisite in their performance respectively. And the scale of wages is graduated accordingly. Such as cannot be well performed, if performed at all, without a high degree of talent are rewarded in proportion; although the amount of bodily toil which they require may be comparatively little: such on the contrary, as can be well performed with but a low degree of talent, are requited with low wages, though the amount of bodily toil which they require be comparatively great. Whether this be just or not I do not now inquire. I state it as a plain matter of fact, and remark respecting it, that persons are too apt to fix their attention strongly upon this single part of it, namely, that where there seems to be the least bodily toil there is manifestly the greatest compensation. The employment, therefore, in which these two conditions meet, captivates them by the force of a twofold attraction, that of the promise of the gain which they desire, and that of the prospect of exemption from the toil which they abhor. They are in haste, therefore, to rush into any employment of this kind, without considering other points essential in the case on which their determination is so precipitately taken. They overlook the toil and the self-denial which are necessary to be endured in preparing for the envied employment; and the habits of self-control which must be confirmed; and the time and money that must be spent in this course of previous preparation; and the native capacity which, as it is the free gift of nature, cannot be seized and appropriated by a wish, but without which all other preparation is entirely useless. Another thing, which such persons cannot so properly be said to overlook as to want the power of discerning, deserves especial notice here. It is this, that the persons on whom nature bestows the mysterious gift in question, are blinded by it—blinded to those very considerations of lucre and toil, which, in the estimation of these people, constitute the whole of the matter. Wherever there is high native talent there is a disposition, con-nate with it, to seek knowledge for its own sake. To minds so

endowed knowledge is the object of devotion; the divinity of their worship. They hunger and thirst after it. They lift up their voice for understanding: Search for it as for hid treasures. Their passion for it is absorbing; it swallows up every other, the passion for lucre among the rest. They think not of it, care not for it, scarcely know what it means. And, as for toil, that is their element, their meat and drink, their pastime, their pleasure. Inaction to them is misery. They need not the lash of authority or the goad of necessity to urge them on; but the curb of restraint to hold them back, and to prevent the never-tiring spirit which works within from destroying the body by overaction. In fact, many of them do perish in this way. Their minds, like heavy ordnance, destroy the material frame-work of their organization, shattering it by the reaction of incessant shocks.

These two, then, are the infallible marks of that endowment which nature bestows on such as are destined to excel in the departments of mental labor. They dream not of gain. Witness Milton's immortal Poem sold for twelve pounds sterling. They shrink not from privation and toil. Witness the whole tribe, from Simonides to Franklin; not one of whom did not labor and abstain, abstain and labor, with the assiduity and frugality of a slave, put by a humane master in the way of earning his freedom. Behold the man of destiny!—But I know not how to speak of the genius of that prodigy of our times, a man, who, rising out of obscurity by the force of his talents alone, seized the energies of Revolutionary France, at the moment when maddened to the highest pitch of phrenzy, and directed them into subserviency to his single will, even as does the practised engineer that volcanic force which science has enabled him to yoke to the car of commerce. Wonderful man! Yet he was not so great as our Washington; since, though he could rule millions, he had not the power to control himself. But, think you that the youthful Napoleon prosecuted with so much ardor the study of the Mathematics at Brienne, because he had visions of Jena and Austerlitz, and knew before hand how his scientific labors might conduce to the series of victories which he afterwards achieved? No; he had no such visions. He was engrossed with his studies, and was undisturbed with dreams of the future. Had it been otherwise the world had never heard of him. "He that saveth his life shall lose it:" there is a grasping after the end which misses its aim, because, in its over-reaching eagerness,



it neglects the means. "He that loseth his life shall find it;" there is an application to the means, which gains the end all the more certainly, because it is *not* ever reaching after it. In conformity to the spirit of these maxims, it is usually found that such as, without the requisite preparations, seek for the distinctions which belong to the higher departments of labor, generally fail in their pursuits. Not, that all who fail are deserving of the censure implied in this remark. There is a degree of uncertainty in all human undertakings, for which we cannot account but by referring it to the sovereignty of the Supreme Disposer of events, in whose inscrutable will lie the issues of things. "Time and chance come alike to all. The race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, nor yet riches to men of understanding." Still, the course of events is made to depend on the tenor of human actions with sufficient regularity to justify all reasonable expectations. Did the connexion between them amount to a certainty, we should be in danger of losing our sense of dependence on the care of an overruling Providence: were it less than experience proves it to be, we should want inducements to prompt us to action. It is not uniform, lest we should presume; it is manifest and ordinary, lest we should despair.

With that part of the law of social life which creates a gradation of employments, with its corresponding scale of wages, it is not strange that there should be more or less dissatisfaction at all times. Men are prone to undervalue, if not entirely to overlook, the advantages of their condition; while they fancy its disadvantages to be more and greater than they really are: and this disposition seems to them to be justified, even in its most unreasonable calculations, when they have constantly before their eyes the example of others, whose labor, because it is employed in a higher sphere, appears to be better rewarded than their own. They conceive that positive injustice is done them, to the amount of the difference that there is between their own unhappy case and that of their envied neighbors; and this injustice they will not fail to magnify by discovering a thousand things in the conduct of their superiors, which a jealous imagination construes into so many signs of contempt shown towards themselves. And there are never wanting a class of people, who, for purposes of their own, strive to increase this dissatisfaction, by putting on the show of much sympathy with these poor people, whom they represent as ground to the earth under the oppression of the higher classes, who are leagued together

for the purpose of maintaining themselves in their ascendancy over the rest of mankind, whom they regard as slaves. This mode of representing the matter is becoming more and more frequent in our country. It has been adopted in imitation of the modes of thinking and speaking beyond the Atlantic, and in countries where the causes of dissatisfaction, to which the notes of its doleful complaint are set, have a real existence.

Now, let it be observed, that if the law in question be a law of social life, it is in vain to complain about it; unless, indeed, the complainer would dissolve society and push things back into a state of barbarism, which would, of course, depopulate the country of three-fourths of its inhabitants, leaving the surviving fourth in a condition, which, though a condition of equality, few would desire, since it consists in deprivation; like the equality which death makes, and only less perfect than that which puts all upon a level by divesting every one alike of all his possessions.

There is, indeed, something like an equality in the condition of such as live under the rule of a despot, who, of course, reduces his subjects to the lowest state of poverty, that he may hold them the more easily in subjection. In such countries capital cannot be profitably invested without being subjected to the rapacity of the despot and his minions. Therefore people will not care to accumulate capital: and labor without capital can never do more than produce a supply of the mere necessities of life. But wherever government secures to its subjects the right to enjoy the fruits of their honest labors, there an inequality of condition will ever be the result. It will be so even among those who labor in the very same employment, and who begin the world with equal advantages. For, some will be more industrious, more frugal, more temperate, and consequently more healthy, than others. These, unless some calamity take place to prevent it, will, of course, become richer than the others, that is to say, they will be the rich, for the term is relative: and the others will be the poor.

Now, is there any way of preventing this inequality? None, unless by persuading the idle to work, the intemperate to quit his excesses, and the profligate to pursue an honest sober course of life. And this is what such as have really at heart the interests of the children of poverty would have them to do. It is their false friends who, after tempting them, it may be, and but too successfully, into the thriftless ways of profligacy, tantalize



them with hopes which can never be realized, and exasperate their feelings by a sense of injuries which they have never received.

But, if some inequality of condition must necessarily result from the different conduct of such as are engaged in the same or similar occupations in life, it will become still greater and more diversified when we take into view the case of such as rise, by their superiority of talent or industry or both, into those employments of a superior grade in which labor commands a higher rate of compensation. In one of our large cities the prescription of the physician, which he can write in five minutes, costs a sum which the hard-working laborer could not earn in as many days. Yet the working man needs as much to feed and clothe him as the physician. Why, then, does he not receive as much? Simply, because the kind of work, which he performs, is abundant in the city; and that of the physician, scarce. But, why should the latter be scarce? Because the time which must be previously spent in obtaining the knowledge necessary to make a physician is so great, that few are willing to remain so long out of employment, and some die in the course of preparation, and some become discouraged at the difficulties in the way and turn aside into other avocations, not having that enthusiasm for the studies which the practice of medicine requires; and some, after going through, or *over*, the course of previous preparation, are found, upon trial, to be deficient in some of the numerous qualifications which are necessary to be all combined in the one who is destined to arrive at eminence in the profession; and further, because that in an affair where life is concerned the public are slow in employing a man, whatever be his talents and skill, whose reputation is not yet established. These considerations operating constantly with united force upon the supply of that kind of labor in which the physician is employed keep it ordinarily below the demand: and were it compensated by no higher wages than what falls to the share of the day-laborer or even the mechanic, it would disappear altogether and the profession of medicine become extinct. True, indeed, some might be expected to engage in the business from motives of mere kindness towards the afflicted: but they must be drawn from the ranks of the opulent alone, as they only could afford to make the sacrifice.

The same reasoning will conduct to a similar conclusion in regard to all those departments of labor for which extraordinary abilities and a course of previous study are necessary to gain the

requisite qualifications. There may be exceptions. Washington refused to receive any compensation for his great services during the war of the revolution: but, as there was perhaps not another man on the continent who was capable of rendering such services, so, it is certain that but few, had they been willing, could have afforded to render them gratuitously.

The number of the individuals who will be affected for good or for ill by the kind of work which a man performs and the manner of performing it, must also be taken into the account. If a laborer, employed in cultivating your farm, works well and faithfully, you and your family receive the benefit: if otherwise, the loss. With the member of Congress the case is far different. If he, with his compeers, make a bad law, the ill effects may be felt by millions and for a long series of years. A declaration of war involves the nation in a debt of hundreds of millions: costs the sacrifice of hundreds of thousands of lives. Yet, the man whose vote brings on the war is rarely expected to have any thing to do with the business of actual warfare. His labor is small indeed compared with that of the man who is to do the fighting. Seated at his ease on a cushioned chair, in a magnificent palace, or council chamber, when the roll is called, he says, Aye; or at most utters words and sentences which he has composed into the form of a speech, "full of sound and fury," with a view to bring others over to his side of the question: then his labor ceases: he has nothing more to do in the matter. But others will have something further to do and after another fashion. Let us fix our eye on one of them and observe his doings. After some drilling and equipping, the time comes for him to march. With a heavy load galling his back and shoulders, he goes at early dawn amidst the frosts and snows of winter, or the dust and sultry heat of summer; sleeps at night on the tented field, and, after marching and counter marching, encountering hardship and danger at every step and in every form, at length he meets the enemy: and if he falls not on the field of battle, torn, mangled and trampled to death amidst heaps of carnage, he returns home, if home he has, with a body disfigured with scars, a constitution shattered and broken, limbs racked with pain and tottering with loss of strength, and spirits exhausted with fatigue and suffering. And, now, what is his pay, compared with the per diem allowance of the man of words, whose breath it was that sent him abroad on the bloody tide of war, to return thus broken and wrecked, the fragments of a man? What is his pay in propor-



tion? One sixteenth! One sixteenth, if you compare it with that of the legislator! Compared with that of the supreme Executive, one seventieth! Here is monstrous inequality, shocking injustice. Be it so: as society is organized, and managed, there is no help for it. The case adduced may itself show how this is. For this very declaration of war, in which the case has its origin, what is it but a piece of work of the utmost moment, because of the important consequences which it involves, and of the utmost difficulty too, because of the amount of wisdom which the performance of it requires, a wisdom so wide-seeing as to view the great question of peace or war in all its bearings, and so clear in its vision that no mists of passion or prejudice or fogs of ignorance can deceive it by false appearances. How shall those concerned, that is, the whole people, obtain the service of such wisdom? The answer is short, and it implies the maxim with which we started out: the Article is rare, and the price to be paid for it must of course be high.

Will any one, to put an extreme case, undertake to affirm that the man who is capable of making laws for the State of Indiana should be paid no more for his services than the shoe-black who waits at his hotel? If not, there must be some other standard, by which to regulate the price of labor, than that of the mere amount of exercise which it costs the muscles, whether they be those of the arms or lungs. And if so, can there be any conceived, more equitable for all and more salutary in its application to the interests of humanity at large, than the one which nature has introduced, experience confirmed, and the decrees of fate forever fixed?

One remark more on the operation of this law and then I shall close.

The utility of all kinds of work performed in the higher departments of labor depends less on the amount of work done than on the style and manner of its execution. The quality and not the quantity is the main point. This being the case, it cannot but happen that a considerable number of such as engage in these departments should fail of success, some from one cause and some from another, but the most, no doubt, from the want of preparation: their minds not having been trained to those habits of close and persevering study which are requisite in order to impart that character of excellence to their work which the nature of it requires. Such is not unfrequently the condition of persons who have completed, in no more than a barely passable

way, the course of studies at college. Raised, it may be, in circumstances which place them, as they think, beyond the necessity of working with their hands for a subsistence, and, at any rate, having lost the opportunity of gaining that muscular strength and hardihood which bodily labor, had they been inured to it, would have conferred; and, on the other hand, lacking that furniture of knowledge and mental energy necessary to ensure their success in the line of those pursuits which they have in view, their prospects may be considered as rather gloomy. For, truly, since they are not properly fitted for any kind of labor bodily or mental, there is reason to fear that, becoming burdens to themselves and useless to society, they may serve only as warnings to deter others from following the same ambiguous course. In old and populous countries the number of such unhappy cases is very great: and to counteract the discouraging effect which they are likely to produce on the minds of the young, there is needed the attractive influence which proceeds from those splendid prizes of honor and emolument which the operation of the law in question holds out to such as are ambitious of distinction in the high departments of mental labor. Take, for example, the case of Dr. Auzoux. This ingenious Frenchman, not satisfied with that perfection to which every thing pertaining to the study of the human anatomy had been brought by others, determined to add something of his own. Years of incessant study and toil were devoted to the object. At length he succeeded in producing what is said to be one of the greatest inventions for the purpose of facilitating that important branch of medical science that France or the world itself can boast. In his native village of St. Aubin d'Eeroville he has established a manufactory that employs sixty work-hands, in which are made complete models of the human body, with all its bones, vessels, muscles, nerves, &c. &c., in such a state of absolute similitude, "as to represent all that relates to myology, angeology, neurology and splanchnology, and even the bones in such a natural manner that it is not easy to distinguish them from the veritable bones of the human" system. Now, for each of these models he receives 3,000 francs; and he is at no loss for purchasers, since the whole world is his market.

This persevering application of industry and skill to the various arts of civilized life can never be secured but by the prospect of rewards sufficiently great to overcome the reluctance to labor and the risk of failure: and as there are certain branches of



industry highly beneficial to the community, which cannot be prosecuted at all without an accumulation of capital, it follows that the law in question is salutary in its effects, for the very reason that it produces accumulation, that is to say, inequality. There ought to be one at least of the Models of Dr. Auzoux in every college in the land. But the colleges are too poor to make the purchase and such other provisions as would be necessary to turn it to advantage: that is, there is too much equality. There is abundance of iron-ore in this county, and idle hands to work it. But the iron-works which have lately been put in operation, are, it is feared, in danger of falling through for want of capital:—another instance to show that among us there is too much equality.

An individual belonging to that class of self-conceited men who are ever cavilling at the laws of society and even at the laws of nature, once said to a company of boys, of which I was one: Do you think God Almighty made these hills?—casting his eyes around on the inequalities of surface with which the country was distinguished. “If he did he acted the fool, for I could have done better myself.” Horrified, as I was at the time, and, to tell the truth, somewhat disconcerted, (being but a child,) at the remarks of this atheist, I was led, by a train of thought, which, though more than forty years have intervened, is now as vivid in my mind as it was then, to perceive clearly enough, that, had the earth been a perfect level, there could have been no fountains nor streams of water; its entire surface had been one marshy waste, unfit for the residence of such a creature as man. Were it not for these hills and mountains, of which the foolish man complained, there could have been, moreover, no union of streamlets, as they descend along their sloping way to the ocean, for the purpose of producing a force to move the machinery stationed at intervals along their course. And, were society to sink down from its high places to the dead level of a perfect equality, capital could not accumulate, so as to set in motion those great enterprizes that furnish employment and the means of a comfortable subsistence to the busy myriads of earth’s mighty population.

Young Gentlemen: you expect before long to be called to engage in some of the pursuits of active life; with little capital, I suppose, except what you may have in your own capacities for mental labor. The season in which your nerves and muscles might have been hardened for bodily toil has nearly elapsed,

having been mostly spent in exercises not of this tendency. The circumstances in which you are placed and the uncertainty that hangs over your future prospects are calculated, certainly, to awaken in your minds, and in those of your friends, doubts, fears, anxieties. But, be not discouraged. You have reason to rejoice, and to be thankful, that you will begin your course of life in a country where that law of social existence, on which some remarks have been just made, is left free from those heavy embarrassments by which its wholesome operation is checked in most other countries. Of the twenty-eight millions which make up the population of the United Kingdom no less than twenty millions are in a state of hopeless depression, living, as on the best authorities they are said to do, from hand to mouth, and without any reason to hope that their condition can in this respect become better by any efforts they can possibly make. Here, it is not so. Extreme poverty, which is doubtless to be deprecated as a source not only of many inconveniences but of great temptations, need not be apprehended among us. And as to wealth you ought not to covet it. It cannot give happiness; and always brings with it heavy cares and responsibilities. Settle it, therefore, in your minds as a truth, which it would be the height of folly to doubt or to disregard, that persevering labor wisely directed to honorable and useful ends, and connected with moderation in all things, is the only safe road to the attainment of whatever good man may reasonably hope for in this world.

“No man e’er found a happy life by chance,

Or yawned it into being with a wish :

Or with the snout of grovelling Appetite

E’er smelt it out, and grubbed it from the dirt.

An art it is, and must be learned ; and learned

By unremitting effort, or be lost.”

If then you go to work cheerfully and courageously ;—if you waste not your time in idleness or in vain amusements ;—if you seek not after pleasure, which always flies from those who pursue it while it follows those whose hearts are engaged in their duty ;—if you be honest and upright in all your ways ;—if you strive to make yourselves useful in the world, disdaining no employment in which you can do good and ambitiously meddling with none for which you are unqualified ;—if, with the labors of the mind you take care to mingle those of the body, such in kind and quantity, as may serve to preserve it in health and vigor ;—if you adopt a system in your pursuits, wisely adapting means to ends, being ready for opportunity when it presents itself, and



doing things in the proper season;—if you strive to be temperate in all things, restraining all your appetites, passions and desires within the bounds of a just moderation, avoiding all ostentation in dress and equipage and frivolous distinctions;—if you practice frugality and sobriety in your manner of life, limiting your expenses to your income and never going in debt, nor incurring responsibilities for any one beyond your ability to discharge them;—if you content yourselves with that measure of success with which it may please Providence to reward your honest exertions, never catching at uncertainties, nor engaging in rash and extravagant enterprises;—if you shun the company of the dissolute and the profligate, never forming any connection with them, not even in the case of innocent recreation;—if you be just and true to all your obligations, faithfully discharging the trust which may be reposed in you, and vigilant in watching over the interests which others may confide to your management, no less than if they were your own;—if you carefully avoid doing injustice to any one not only in word and deed, but even in the judgments you form in the privacy of your own bosoms;—if you be ever ready, according to your ability, to help and comfort such as may need your assistance:—if you follow these maxims, I will not say you will certainly arrive at wealth, for that, as I have intimated already is really not desirable in all cases:—nor yet that you will escape poverty, for, in the language of the wise man, “time and chance come to all,” or to speak more in the spirit of that clearer light which the christian religion has shed on such subjects,—God may choose for you poverty as knowing it best for you—but this I may be justified, by the known and stated order of things, in holding out to you as what may be reasonably expected from such a course of life as has been just now recommended,—a condition free from the distresses of extreme want, a character above reproach, your own approbation, the respect of the wise and good, years of usefulness in middle age, and in the decline of life such consolations as must naturally arise in the mind on the retrospect of a virtuous course of conduct. Alas! Young Gentlemen: besides all the other conditions which I have named, on which your prospects for the future are suspended, there is another, which all along has been in my mind, and which has indeed been engraven there, twice over in such a manner as, were it possible ever to be lost sight of at other times, the present occasion could not fail to present it full in my view. Against this condition, this sad contin-

gency, which is a contingency only as to the time and manner of its arrival, in all other respects a certainty inevitable, and sooner or later sure to take place—against this much dreaded contingency—certainty I would say—how shall you be guarded?

You know my sentiments on this solemn subject. I can only recal them here in the most summary manner.

If religion were of no other use than to check that raging thirst for gain, that wild and reckless spirit of extravagant enterprize, which characterizes us as a people, and which of late has brought such sad changes upon so many, its value could not be calculated. But it not only does this, but much more than this: it calms the turbulence of passion; sweetens the acrid humors of the soul; directs its moral instincts to their proper objects in that spiritual world which it reveals; fixes in the soul the grand ideas of God and Immortality; and, by concentrating in these its powers of feeling and acting, brings the whole man into a state of harmony with the economy of his mental constitution and his moral relations, and the laws of his being.

The Bible will show you what this religion is. My last counsel to you is, therefore this: Study this book in a proper spirit. Make it your Vade mecum. For, in the language of that truly good and great man the celebrated John Locke, "it has God for its author, Salvation for its end, and Truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter."