# Fors Clavigera (Volume 2 of 8)Letters to the workmen and labourers of Great Britain

[Produced by Jeroen Hellingman and the Online Distributed Proofreading Team at http://www.pgdp.net/ for Project Gutenberg (This file was produced from images generously made available by The Internet Archive/American Libraries.)  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
FORS CLAVIGERA.  
LETTERS  
TO THE WORKMEN AND LABOURERS OF GREAT BRITAIN.  
  
BY JOHN RUSKIN, LL.D., HONORARY STUDENT OF CHRIST CHURCH, AND SLADE PROFESSOR OF FINE ART.  
  
Vol. II.  
  
GEORGE ALLEN, SUNNYSIDE, ORPINGTON, KENT. 1872.  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
FORS CLAVIGERA.  
LETTER XIII.  
  
My Friends,  
1st January, 1872.  
I would wish you a happy New Year, if I thought my wishes likely to be of the least use. Perhaps, indeed, if your cap of liberty were what you always take it for, a wishing cap, I might borrow it of you, for once; and be so much cheered by the chime of its bells, as to wish you a happy New Year, whether you deserved one or not: which would be the worst thing I could possibly bring to pass for you. But wishing cap, belled or silent, you can lend me none; and my wishes having proved, for the most part, vain for myself, except in making me wretched till I got rid of them, I will not present you with anything which I have found to be of so little worth. But if you trust more to any one else's than mine, let me advise your requesting them to wish that you may deserve a happy New Year, whether you get one or not.  
To some extent, indeed, that way, you are sure to get it: and it will much help you towards the seeing such way if you would make it a practice in your talk always to say you "deserve" things, instead of that you "have a right" to them. Say that you "deserve" a vote,--"deserve" so much a day, instead of that you have "a right to" a vote, etc. The expression is both more accurate and more general; for if it chanced, which heaven forbid,--but it might be,--that you deserved a whipping, you would never think of expressing that fact by saying you "had a right to" a whipping; and if you deserve anything better than that, why conceal your deserving under the neutral term, "rights"; as if you never meant to claim more than might be claimed also by entirely nugatory and worthless persons? Besides, such accurate use of language will lead you sometimes into reflection on the fact, that what you deserve, it is not only well for you to get, but certain that you ultimately will get; and neither less nor more.  
Ever since Carlyle wrote that sentence about rights and mights, in his "French Revolution," all blockheads of a benevolent class have been declaiming against him, as a worshipper of force. What else, in the name of the three Magi, is to be worshipped? Force of brains, Force of heart, Force of hand;--will you dethrone these, and worship apoplexy?--despise the spirit of Heaven, and worship phthisis? Every condition of idolatry is summed in the one broad wickedness of refusing to worship Force, and resolving to worship No-Force;--denying the Almighty, and bowing down to four-and-twopence with a stamp on it.  
But Carlyle never meant in that place to refer you to such final truth. He meant but to tell you that before you dispute about what you should get, you would do well to find out first what is to be gotten. Which briefly is, for everybody, at last, their deserts, and no more.  
I did not choose, in beginning this book a year since, to tell you what I meant it to become. This, for one of several things, I mean,--that it shall put before you so much of the past history of the world, in an intelligible manner, as may enable you to see the laws of Fortune or Destiny, "Clavigera," Nail bearing; or, in the full idea, nail-and-hammer bearing; driving the iron home with hammer-stroke, so that nothing shall be moved; and fastening each of us at last to the Cross we have chosen to carry. Nor do I doubt being able to show you that this irresistible power is also just; appointing measured return for every act and thought, such as men deserve.  
And that being so, foolish moral writers will tell you that whenever you do wrong you will be punished, and whenever you do right rewarded: which is true, but only half the truth. And foolish immoral writers will tell you that if you do right, you will get no good; and if you do wrong dexterously, no harm. Which, in their sense of good and harm, is true also, but, even in that sense, only half the truth. The joined and four-square truth is, that every right is exactly rewarded, and every wrong exactly punished; but that, in the midst of this subtle, and, to our impatience, slow, retribution, there is a startlingly separate or counter ordinance of good and evil,--one to this man, and the other to that,--one at this hour of our lives, and the other at that,--ordinance which is entirely beyond our control; and of which the providential law, hitherto, defies investigation.  
To take an example near at hand, which I can answer for. Throughout the year which ended this morning, I have been endeavouring, more than hitherto in any equal period, to act for others more than for myself: and looking back on the twelve months, am satisfied that in some measure I have done right. So far as I am sure of that, I see also, even already, definitely proportioned fruit, and clear results following from that course;--consequences simply in accordance with the unfailing and undeceivable Law of Nature.](61591.docx#chunk9819)

[That it has chanced to me, in the course of the same year, to have to sustain the most acute mental pain yet inflicted on my life;--to pass through the most nearly mortal illness;--and to write your Christmas letter beside my mother's dead body, are appointments merely of the hidden Fors, or Destiny, whose power I mean to trace for you in past history, being hitherto, in the reasons of it, indecipherable, yet palpably following certain laws of storm, which are in the last degree wonderful and majestic.  
Setting this Destiny, over which you have no control whatsoever, for the time, out of your thoughts, there remains the symmetrical destiny, over which you have control absolute--namely, that you are ultimately to get--exactly what you are worth.  
And your control over this destiny consists, therefore, simply in being worth more or less, and not at all in voting that you are worth more or less. Nay, though you should leave voting, and come to fighting, which I see is next proposed, you will not, even that way, arrive any nearer to your object--admitting that you have an object, which is much to be doubted. I hear, indeed, that you mean to fight for a Republic, in consequence of having been informed by Mr. John Stuart Mill, and others, that a number of utilities are embodied in that object. We will inquire into the nature of this object presently, going over the ground of my last January's letter again; but first, may I suggest to you that it would be more prudent, instead of fighting to make us all republicans against our will,--to make the most of the republicans you have got. There are many, you tell me, in England,--more in France, a sprinkling in Italy,--and nobody else in the United States. What should you fight for, being already in such prevalence? Fighting is unpleasant, now-a-days, however glorious, what with mitrailleuses, torpedoes, and mismanaged commissariat. And what, I repeat, should you fight for? All the fighting in the world cannot make us Tories change our old opinions, any more than it will make you change your new ones. It cannot make us leave off calling each other names if we like--Lord this, and the Duke of that, whether you republicans like it or not. After a great deal of trouble on both sides, it might, indeed, end in abolishing our property; but without any trouble on either side, why cannot your friends begin by abolishing their own? Or even abolishing a tithe of their own? Ask them to do merely as much as I, an objectionable old Tory, have done for you. Make them send you in an account of their little properties, and strike you off a tenth, for what purposes you see good; and for the remaining nine-tenths, you will find clue to what should be done in the 'Republican' of last November, wherein Mr. W. Riddle, C.E., "fearlessly states" that all property must be taken under control; which is, indeed, precisely what Mr. Carlyle has been telling you these last thirty years, only he seems to have been under an impression, which I certainly shared with him, that you republicans objected to control of any description. Whereas if you let anybody put your property under control, you will find practically he has a good deal of hold upon you also.  
You are not all agreed upon that point perhaps? But you are all agreed that you want a Republic. Though England is a rich country, having worked herself literally black in the face to become so, she finds she cannot afford to keep a Queen any longer;--is doubtful even whether she would not get on better Queenless; and I see with consternation that even one of my own personal friends, Mr. Auberon Herbert, rising the other day at Nottingham, in the midst of great cheering, declares that, though he is not in favour of any immediate change, yet, "if we asked ourselves what form of government was the most reasonable, the most in harmony with ideas of self-government and self-responsibility, and what Government was most likely to save us from unnecessary divisions of party, and to weld us into one compact mass, he had no hesitation in saying the weight of argument was in favour of a Republic." [1]  
Well, suppose we were all welded into a compact mass. Might it not still be questionable what sort of a mass we were? After any quantity of puddling, iron is still nothing better than iron;--in any rarity of dispersion, gold-dust is still gold. Mr. Auberon Herbert thinks it desirable that you should be stuck together. Be it so; but what is there to stick? At this time of year, doubtless, some of your children, interested generally in production of puddings, delight themselves, to your great annoyance, with speculative pudding in the gutter; and enclose, between unctuous tops and bottoms, imaginary mince. But none of them, I suppose, deliberately come in to their mothers, at cooking-time, with materials for a treat on Republican principles. Mud for suet--gravel for plums--droppings of what heaven may send for flavour;--"Please, mother, a towel, to knot it tight--(or, to use Mr. Herbert's expression, "weld it into a compact mass")--Now for the old saucepan, mother; and you just lay the cloth!"](61591.docx#chunk9820)

[My friends, I quoted to you last year the foolishest thing, yet said, according to extant history, by lips of mankind--namely, that the cause of starvation is quantity of meat. [2] But one can yet see what the course of foolish thought was which achieved that saying: whereas, though it is not absurd to quite the same extent to believe that a nation depends for happiness and virtue on the form of its government, it is more difficult to understand how so large a number of otherwise rational persons have been beguiled into thinking so. The stuff of which the nation is made is developed by the effort and the fate of ages: according to that material, such and such government becomes possible to it, or impossible. What other form of government you try upon it than the one it is fit for, necessarily comes to nothing; and a nation wholly worthless is capable of none.  
Notice, therefore, carefully Mr. Herbert's expression "welded into a compact mass." The phrase would be likely enough to occur to any one's mind, in a midland district; and meant, perhaps, no more than if the speaker had said "melted," or "blended" into a mass. But whether Mr. Herbert meant more or not, his words meant more. You may melt glass or glue into a mass, but you can only weld, or wield, metal. And are you sure that, if you would have a Republic, you are capable of being welded into one? Granted that you are no better than iron, are you as good? Have you the toughness in you? and can you bear the hammering? Or, would your fusion together,--your literal con-fusion--be as of glass only, blown thin with nitrogen, and shattered before it got cold?  
Welded Republics there indeed have been, ere now, but they ask first for bronze, then for a hammerer, and mainly, for patience on the anvil. Have you any of the three at command,--patience, above all things, the most needed, yet not one of your prominent virtues? And, finally, for the cost of such smith's work,--My good friends, let me recommend you, in that point of view, to keep your Queen.  
Therefore, for your first bit of history this year, I will give you one pertinent to the matter, which will show you how a monarchy, and such a Republic as you are now capable of producing, have verily acted on special occasion, so that you may compare their function accurately.  
The special occasion that I choose shall be the most solemn of all conceivable acts of Government; the adjudging and execution of the punishment of Death. The two examples of it shall be, one under an absolutely despotic Monarchy, acting through ministers trained in principles of absolute despotism; and the other in a completely free Republic, acting by its collective wisdom, and in association of its practical energies.  
The example of despotism shall be taken from the book which Mr. Froude most justly calls "the prose epic of the English nation," the records compiled by Richard Hakluyt, Preacher, and sometime Student of Christchurch in Oxford, imprinted at London by Ralph Newberie, anno 1599, and then in five volumes, quarto, in 1811, two hundred and seventy copies only of this last edition being printed.](61591.docx#chunk9821)

[These volumes contain the original--usually personal,--narratives of the earliest voyages of the great seamen of all countries,--the chief part of them English; who "first went out across the unknown seas, fighting, discovering, colonizing; and graved out the channels, paving them at last with their bones, through which the commerce and enterprise of England has flowed out over all the world." [3] I mean to give you many pieces to read out of this book, which Mr. Froude tells you truly is your English Homer; this piece, to our present purpose, is already quoted by him in his essay on England's forgotten worthies; among whom, far-forgotten though they be, most of you must have heard named Sir Francis Drake. And of him, it now imports you to know this much: that he was the son of a clergyman, who fled into Devonshire to escape the persecution of Henry VIII. (abetted by our old friend, Sir Thomas of Utopia)--that the little Frank was apprenticed by his father to the master of a small vessel trading to the Low Countries; and that as apprentice, he behaved so well that his master, dying, left him his vessel, and he begins his independent life with that capital. Tiring of affairs with the Low Countries, he sells his little ship, and invests his substance in the new trade to the West Indies. In the course of his business there, the Spaniards attack him, and carry off his goods. Whereupon, Master Francis Drake, making his way back to England, and getting his brother John to join with him, after due deliberation, fits out two ships, to wit, the Passover of 70 tons, and the Swan of 24, with 73 men and boys (both crews, all told,) and a year's provision; and, thus appointed, Master Frank in command of the Passover, and Master John in command of the Swan, weigh anchor from Plymouth on the 24th of May, 1572, to make reprisals on the most powerful nation of the then world. And making his way in this manner over the Atlantic, and walking with his men across the Isthmus of Panama, he beholds "from the top of a very high hill, the great South Sea, on which no English ship had ever sailed. Whereupon, he lifted up his hands to God, and implored His blessing on the resolution which he then formed, of sailing in an English ship on that sea." In the meantime, building some light fighting pinnaces, of which he had brought out the material in the Passover, and boarding what Spanish ships he can, transferring his men to such as he finds most convenient to fight in, he keeps the entire coast of Spanish America in hot water for several months; and having taken and rifled, between Carthagena and Nombre de Dios (Name of God) more than two hundred ships of all sizes, sets sail cheerfully for England, arriving at Plymouth on the 9th of August, 1573, on Sunday, in the afternoon; and so much were the people delighted with the news of their arrival, that they left the preacher, and ran in crowds to the quay, with shouts and congratulations.  
He passes four years in England, explaining American affairs to Queen Elizabeth and various persons at court; and at last in mid-life, in the year 1577, he obtains a commission from the Queen, by which he is constituted Captain-general of a fleet of five ships: the Pelican, admiral, 100 tons, his own ship; the Elizabeth, vice-admiral, 80 tons; the Swan, 50 tons; Marigold, 30; and Christopher (Christbearer) 15; the collective burden of the entire fleet being thus 275 tons; its united crews 164 men, all told: and it carries whatever Sir Francis thought "might contribute to raise in those nations, with whom he should have any intercourse, the highest ideas of the politeness and magnificence of his native country. He, therefore, not only procured a complete service of silver for his own table, and furnished the cook-room with many vessels of the same metal, but engaged several musicians to accompany him."](61591.docx#chunk9822)

[I quote from Johnson's life of him,--you do not know if in jest or earnest? Always in earnest, believe me, good friends. If there be jest in the nature of things, or of men, it is no fault of mine. I try to set them before you as they truly are. And Sir Francis and his crew, musicians and all, were in uttermost earnest, as in the quiet course of their narrative you will find. For arriving on the 20th of June, 1578, "in a very good harborough, called by Magellan Port St. Julian, where we found a gibbet standing upon the maine, which we supposed to be the place where Magellan did execution upon his disobedient and rebellious company; ... in this port our Generall began to inquire diligently of the actions of M. Thomas Doughtie, and found them not to be such as he looked for, but tending rather to contention or mutinie, or some other disorder, whereby (without redresse) the successe of the voyage might greatly have bene hazarded; whereupon the company was called together and made acquainted with the particulars of the cause, which were found, partly by Master Doughtie's owne confession, and partly by the evidence of the fact, to be true; which when our Generall saw, although his private affection to M. Doughtie (as hee then in the presence of us all sacredly protested) was great, yet the care he had of the state of the voyage, of the expectation of her Maiestie, and of the honour of his countrey, did more touch him (as, indeede, it ought) than the private respect of one man: so that, the cause being thoroughly heard, and all things done in good order, as neere as might be to the course of our lawes in England, it was concluded that M. Doughtie should receive punishment according to the qualitie of the offence: and he, seeing no remedie but patience for himselfe, desired before his death to receive the Communion, which he did at the hands of M. Fletcher, our Minister, and our Generall himselfe accompanied him in that holy action: which being done, and the place of execution made ready, hee having embraced our Generall, and taken his leave of all the companie, with prayer for the Queen's Maiestie and our realme, in quiet sort laid his head to the blocke, where he ended his life. This being done, our Generall made divers speaches to the whole company, persuading us to unitie, obedience, love, and regard of our voyage; and for the better confirmation thereof, willed evry man the next Sunday following to prepare himselfe to receive the Communion, as Christian brethren and friends ought to doe, which was done in very reverent sort, and so with good contentment every man went about his businesse."  
Thus pass judgment and execution, under a despotic Government and despotic Admiral, by religious, or, it may be, superstitious, laws.  
You shall next see how judgment and execution pass on the purest republican principles; every man's opinion being held as good as his neighbour's; and no superstitious belief whatsoever interfering with the wisdom of popular decision, or the liberty of popular action. The republicanism shall also be that of this enlightened nineteenth century: in other respects the circumstances are similar; for the event takes place during an expedition of British--not subjects, indeed, but quite unsubjected persons,--acknowledging neither Queen nor Admiral,--in search, nevertheless, of gold and silver, in America, like Sir Francis himself. And to make all more precisely illustrative, I am able to take the account of the matter from the very paper which contained Mr. Auberon Herbert's speech, the 'Pall Mall Gazette' of 5th December last. In another column, a little before the addresses of the members for Nottingham, you will therein find, quoted from the 'New York Tribune,' the following account of some executions which took place at "the Angels" (Los Angeles), California, on the 24th October.  
  
"The victims were some unoffending Chinamen, the executioners were some 'warm-hearted and impulsive' Irishmen, assisted by some Mexicans. It seems that owing to an impression that the houses inhabited by the Chinamen were filled with gold, a mob collected in front of a store belonging to one of them named Yo Hing with the object of plundering it. The Chinamen barricaded the building, shots were fired, and an American was killed. Then commenced the work of pillage and murder. The mob forced an entrance, four Chinamen were shot dead, seven or eight were wounded, and seventeen were taken and hanged. The following description of the hanging of the first victim will show how the executions were conducted:--  
"Weng Chin, a merchant, was the first victim of hanging. He was led through the streets by two lusty Irishmen, who were cheered on by a crowd of men and boys, most of Irish and Mexican birth. Several times the unfortunate Chinaman faltered or attempted to extricate himself from the two brutes who were leading him, when a half-drunken Mexican in his immediate rear would plunge the point of a large dirk knife into his back. This, of course, accelerated his speed, but never a syllable fell from his mouth. Arriving at the eastern gate of Tomlinson's old lumber yard, just out of Temple Street, hasty preparations for launching the inoffensive man into eternity were followed by his being pulled up to the beam with a rope round his neck. He didn't seem to 'hang right,' and one of the Irishmen got upon his shoulders and jumped upon them, breaking his collar-bone. What with shots, stabs, and strangulation, and other modes of civilized torture, the victim was 'hitched up' for dead, and the crowd gave vent to their savage delight in demoniac yells and a jargon which too plainly denoted their Hibernian nationality.](61591.docx#chunk9823)

["One victim, a Chinese physician of some celebrity, Dr. Gnee Sing, offered his tormentors 4,000 dollars in gold to let him go. His pockets were immediately cut and ransacked, a pistol-shot mutilated one side of his face 'dreadfully,' and he too was 'stretched up' with cheers. Another wretched man was jerked up with great force against the beam, and the operation repeated until his head was broken in a way we cannot describe. Three Chinese, one a youth of about fifteen years old, picked up at random, and innocent of even a knowledge of the disturbance, were hanged in the same brutal manner. Hardly a word escaped them, but the younger one said, as the rope was being placed round his neck, 'Me no 'fraid to die; me velly good China boy; me no hurt no man.' Three Chinese boys who were hanged 'on the side of a waggon' struggled hard for their lives. One managed to lay hold of the rope, upon which two Irishmen beat his hands with clubs and pistols till he released his hold and fell into a 'hanging position.' The Irishmen then blazed away at him with bullets, and so put an end to his existence."  
  
My republican friends--or otherwise than friends, as you choose to have it--you will say, I presume, that this comparison of methods of magistracy is partial and unfair? It is so. All comparisons--as all experiments--are unfair till you have made more. More you shall make with me; and as many as you like, on your own side. I will tell you, in due time, some tales of Tory gentlemen who lived, and would scarcely let anybody else live, at Padua and Milan, which will do your hearts good. Meantime, meditate a little over these two instances of capital justice, as done severally by monarchists and republicans in the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries; and meditate, not a little, on the capital justice which you have lately accomplished yourselves in France. You have had it all your own way there, since Sedan. No Emperor to paralyze your hands any more, or impede the flow of your conversation. Anything, since that fortunate hour, to be done,--anything to be said, that you liked; and in the midst of you, found by sudden good fortune, two quiet honest and brave men; one old and one young, ready to serve you with all their strength, and evidently of supreme gifts in the way of service,--Generals Trochu and Rossel. You have exiled one, shot the other, [4] and, but that, as I told you, my wishes are of no account that I know of, I should wish you joy of your "situation."  
  
Believe me, faithfully yours,  
JOHN RUSKIN.  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
FORS CLAVIGERA.  
LETTER XIV.  
  
Denmark Hill, 1st February, 1872.  
My Friends,](61591.docx#chunk9824)

[In going steadily over our ground again, roughly broken last year, you see that, after endeavouring, as I did last month, to make you see somewhat more clearly the absurdity of fighting for a Holy Republic before you are sure of having got so much as a single saint to make it of, I have now to illustrate farther the admission made in page 8 of my first Letter, that even the most courteous and perfect Monarchy cannot make an unsaintly life into a saintly one, nor constitute thieving, for instance, an absolutely praiseworthy profession, however glorious or delightful. It is indeed more difficult to show this in the course of past history than any other moral truth whatsoever. For, without doubt or exception, thieving has not only hitherto been the most respected of professions, but the most healthy, cheerful, and in the practical outcome of it, though not in theory, even the honestest, followed by men. Putting the higher traditional and romantic ideals, such as that of our Robin Hood, and the Scottish Red Robin, for the time, aside, and keeping to meagre historical facts, could any of you help giving your heartiest sympathy to Master Francis Drake, setting out in his little Paschal Lamb to seek his fortune on the Spanish seas, and coming home, on that happy Sunday morning, to the unspeakable delight of the Cornish congregation? Would you like to efface the stories of Edward III., and his lion's whelp, from English history; and do you wish that instead of pillaging the northern half of France, as you read of them in the passages quoted in my fourth Letter, and fighting the Battle of Crecy to get home again, they had stayed at home all the time; and practised, shall we say, upon the flute, as I find my moral friends think Frederick of Prussia should have done? Or would you have chosen that your Prince Harry should never have played that set with his French tennis-balls, which won him Harfleur, and Rouen, and Orleans, and other such counters, which we might have kept, to this day perhaps, in our pockets, but for the wood maid of Domremy? Are you ready, even now, in the height of your morality, to give back India to the Brahmins and their cows, and Australia to her aborigines and their apes? You are ready? Well, my Christian friends, it does one's heart good to hear it, providing only you are quite sure you know what you are about. "Let him that stole steal no more; but rather let him labour." You are verily willing to accept that alternative? I inquire anxiously, because I see that your Under Secretary of State for India, Mr. Grant Duff, proposes to you, in his speech at Elgin, not at all as the first object of your lives to be honest; but, as the first, to be rich, and the second to be intelligent: now when you have all become rich and intelligent, how do you mean to live? Mr. Grant Duff, of course, means by being rich that you are each to have two powdered footmen; but then who are to be the footmen, now that we mustn't have blacks? And granting you all the intelligence in the world on the most important subjects,--the spots in the sun, or the nodes of the moon, as aforesaid,--will that help you to get your dinner, unless you steal it in the old fashion? The subject is indeed discussed with closer definition than by Mr. Grant Duff, by Mr. William Riddle, C.E., the authority I quoted to you for taking property "under control." You had better perhaps be put in complete possession of his views, as stated by himself in the 'Republican,' of December last; the rather, as that periodical has not had, according to Mr. Riddle, hitherto a world-wide circulation:--  
  
"THE SIMPLE AND ONLY REMEDY FOR THE WANTS OF NATIONS."  
"It is with great grief that I hear that your periodical finds but a limited sale. I ask you to insert a few words from me, which may strike some of your readers as being important. These are all in all. What all nations want, Sir, are--1, Shelter; 2, Food; 3, Clothes; 4, Warmth; 5, Cleanliness; 6, Health; 7, Love; 8, Beauty. These are only to be got in one way. I will state it. 1.--An International Congress must make a number of steam engines, or use those now made, and taking all property under its control (I fearlessly state it) must roll off iron and glass for buildings to shelter hundreds of millions of people. 2.--Must, by such engines, make steam apparatus to plough immense plains of wheat, where steam has elbow-room abroad; must make engines to grind it on an enormous scale, first fetching it in flat-bottomed ships, made of simple form, larger than the Great Eastern, and of simple form of plates, machine fastened; must bake it by machine ovens commensurate. 3.--Machine looms must work unattended night and day, rolling off textile yarns and fabrics, and machines must make clothes, just as envelopes are knocked off. 4.--Machinery must do laundress work, iron and mangling; and, in a word, our labour must give place to machinery, laid down in gigantic factories on common-sense principles by an International leverage. This is the education you must inculcate. Then man will be at last emancipated. All else is utter bosh, and I will prove it so when and wherever I can get the means to lecture.  
"Wm. Riddle, C.E.  
"South Lambeth, Nov. 2."](61591.docx#chunk9825)

[Unfortunately, till those means can be obtained, (may it be soon), it remains unriddled to us on what principles of "international leverage" the love and beauty are to be provided. But the point I wish you mainly to notice is, that for this general emancipation, and elbow-room for men and steam, you are still required to find "immense plains of wheat abroad." Is it not probable that these immense plains may belong to somebody "abroad" already? And if not, instead of bringing home their produce in flat-bottomed ships, why not establish, on the plains themselves, your own flat-bottomed--I beg pardon,--flat-bellied, persons, instead of living here in glass cases, which surely, even at the British Museum, cannot be associated in your minds with the perfect manifestation of love and beauty? It is true that love is to be measured, in your perfected political economy, by rectangular area, as you will find on reference to the ingenious treatise of Mr. W. Stanley Jevons, M.A., Professor of Logic and Political Economy in Owens College, Manchester, who informs you, among other interesting facts, that pleasure and pain "are the ultimate objects of the calculus of economy," and that a feeling, whether of pleasure or pain, may be regarded as having two dimensions--namely, in duration and intensity, so that the feeling, say of a minute, "may be represented by a rectangle whose base corresponds to the duration of a minute, and whose height is proportioned to the intensity." [5] The collective area of the series of rectangles will mark the "aggregate of feeling generated."  
But the Professor appears unconscious that there is a third dimension of pleasure and pain to be considered, besides their duration and intensity; and that this third dimension is to some persons, the most important of all--namely, their quality. It is possible to die of a rose in aromatic pain; and, on the contrary, for flies and rats, even pleasure may be the reverse of aromatic. There is swine's pleasure, and dove's; villain's pleasure, and gentleman's, to be arranged, the Professor will find, by higher analysis, in eternally dissimilar rectangles.  
My friends, the follies of Modern Liberalism, many and great though they be, are practically summed in this denial or neglect of the quality and intrinsic value of things. Its rectangular beatitudes, and spherical benevolences,--theology of universal indulgence, and jurisprudence which will hang no rogues, mean, one and all of them, in the root, incapacity of discerning, or refusal to discern, worth and unworth in anything, and least of all in man; whereas Nature and Heaven command you, at your peril, to discern worth from unworth in everything, and most of all in man. Your main problem is that ancient and trite one, "Who is best man?" and the Fates forgive much,--forgive the wildest, fiercest, cruellest experiments,--if fairly made for the determination of that. Theft and blood-guiltiness are not pleasing in their sight; yet the favouring powers of the spiritual and material world will confirm to you your stolen goods; and their noblest voices applaud the lifting of your spear, and rehearse the sculpture of your shield, if only your robbing and slaying have been in fair arbitrament of that question, "Who is best man?" But if you refuse such inquiry, and maintain every man for his neighbour's match, [6]--if you give vote to the simple, and liberty to the vile, the powers of those spiritual and material worlds in due time present you inevitably with the same problem, soluble now only wrong side upwards; and your robbing and slaying must be done then to find out "Who is worst man?" Which, in so wide an order of merit, is, indeed, not easy; but a complete Tammany Ring, and lowest circle in the Inferno of Worst, you are sure to find, and to be governed by.  
And you may note that the wars of men, in this winnowing or sifting function, separate themselves into three distinct stages. In healthy times of early national development, the best men go out to battle, and divide the spoil; in rare generosity, perhaps, giving as much to those who tarry by the stuff, as to those who have followed to the field. In the second, and more ingenious stage, which is the one we have reached now in England and America, the best men still go out to battle, and get themselves killed,--or, at all events, well withdrawn from public affairs,--and the worst stop at home, manage the government, and make money out of the commissariat. (See SS 124 of 'Munera Pulveris,' and my note there on the last American War.) Then the third and last stage, immediately preceding the dissolution of any nation, is when its best men (such as they are)--stop at home too!--and pay other people to fight for them. And this last stage, not wholly reached in England yet, is, however, within near prospect; at least, if we may again on this point refer to, and trust, the anticipations of Mr. Grant Duff, 'who racks his brains, without success, to think of any probable combination of European events in which the assistance of our English force would be half so useful to our allies as money.'](61591.docx#chunk9826)

[Next month I will give you some farther account of the operations in favour of their Italian allies in the fourteenth century, effected by the White company under Sir John Hawkwood;--(they first crossed the Alps with a German captain, however,)--not at all consisting in disbursements of money; but such, on the contrary, as to obtain for them--(as you read in my first Letter) the reputation, with good Italian judges, of being the best thieves known at the time. It is in many ways important for you to understand the origin and various tendencies of mercenary warfare; the essential power of which, in Christendom, dates, singularly enough, from the struggle of the free burghers of Italy with a Tory gentleman, a friend of Frederick II. of Germany; the quarrel, of which you shall hear the prettiest parts, being one of the most dramatic and vital passages of mediaeval history. Afterwards we shall be able to examine, more intelligently, the prospects in store for us according to the--I trust not too painfully racked,--brains of our Under Secretary of State. But I am tired to-day of following modern thought in these unexpectedly attenuated conditions; and I believe you will also be glad to rest, with me, by reading a few words of true history of such life as, in here and there a hollow of the rocks of Europe, just persons have sometimes lived, untracked by the hounds of war. And in laying them before you, I begin to give these letters the completed character I intend for them; first, as it may seem to me needful, commenting on what is passing at the time, with reference always to the principles and plans of economy I have to set before you; and then collecting out of past literature, and in occasional frontispieces or woodcuts, out of past art, what may confirm or illustrate things that are for ever true: choosing the pieces of the series so that, both in art and literature, they may become to you in the strictest sense, educational, and familiarise you with the look and manner of fine work.  
I want you, accordingly, now to read attentively some pieces of agricultural economy, out of Marmontel's 'Contes Moraux,'--(we too grandly translate the title into 'Moral Tales,' for the French word Moeurs does not in accuracy correspond to our Morals); and I think it first desirable that you should know something about Marmontel himself. He was a French gentleman of the old school; not noble, nor, in French sense, even "gentilhomme;" but a peasant's son, who made his way into Parisian society by gentleness, wit, and a dainty and candid literary power. He became one of the humblest, yet honestest, placed scholars at the court of Louis XV., and wrote pretty, yet wise, sentimental stories, in finished French, which I must render as I can in broken English; but, however rudely translated, the sayings and thoughts in them deserve your extreme attention, for in their fine, tremulous way, like the blossoming heads of grass in May, they are perfect. For introduction then, you shall have, to-day, his own description of his native place, Bort, in central south France, and of the circumstances of his child-life. You must take it without further preamble--my pages running short.  
"Bort, situated on the river Dordogne, between Auvergne and the province of Limoges, is a frightful place enough, seen by the traveller descending suddenly on it; lying, as it does, at the bottom of a precipice, and looking as if the storm torrents would sweep it away, or as if, some day, it must be crushed under a chain of volcanic rocks, some planted like towers on the height which commands the town, and others already overhanging, or half uprooted: but, once in the valley, and with the eye free to wander there, Bort becomes full of smiles. Above the town, on a green island which the river embraces with equal streams, there is a thicket peopled with birds, and animated also with the motion and noise of a mill. On each side of the river are orchards and fields, cultivated with laborious care. Below the village the valley opens, on one side of the river, into a broad, flat meadow, watered by springs; on the other, into sloping fields, crowned by a belt of hills whose soft slope contrasts with the opposing rocks, and is divided, farther on, by a torrent which rolls and leaps through the forest, and falls into the Dordogne in one of the most beautiful cataracts on the Continent. Near that spot is situated the little farm of St. Thomas, where I used to read Virgil under the blossoming trees that surrounded our bee-hives, and where I made delicious lunches of their honey. On the other side of the town, above the mill, and on the slope to the river, was the enclosure where, on fete days, my father took me to gather grapes from the vines he had himself planted, or cherries, plums, and apples, from the trees he had grafted.  
"But what in my memory is the chief charm of my native place is the impression of the affection which my family had for me, and with which my soul was penetrated in earliest infancy. If there is any goodness in my character, it is to these sweet emotions, and the perpetual happiness of loving and being loved that I believe it is owing. What a gift does Heaven bestow on us in the virtue of parents!](61591.docx#chunk9827)

["I owed much also to a certain gentleness of manners which reigned then in my native town; and truly the sweet and simple life that one led there must have had a strange attraction, for nothing was more unusual than that the children of Bort should ever go away from it. In their youth they were well educated, and in the neighbouring colleges their colony distinguished itself; but they came back to their homes as a swarm of bees comes back to the hive with its spoil.  
"I learned to read in a little convent where the nuns were friends of my mother. Thence I passed to the school of a priest of the town, who gratuitously, and for his own pleasure, devoted himself to the instruction of children; he was the only son of a shoemaker, one of the honestest fellows in the world; and this churchman was a true model of filial piety. I can yet remember, as if I had seen it but a moment since, the air of quiet courtesy and mutual regard which the old man and his son maintained to each other; the one never losing sight of the dignity of the priesthood, nor the other of the sanctity of the paternal character."  
I interrupt my translation for a moment to ask you to notice how this finished scholar applies his words. A vulgar writer would most probably have said "the sanctity of the priesthood" and "the dignity of the paternal character." But it is quite possible that a priest may not be a saint, yet (admitting the theory of priesthood at all) his authority and office are not, therefore, invalidated. On the other hand, a father may be entirely inferior to his son, incapable of advising him, and, if he be wise, claiming no strict authority over him. But the relation between the two is always sacred.  
"The Abbe Vaissere" (that was his name), "after he had fulfilled his duty at the church, divided the rest of his time between reading, and the lessons he gave to us. In fine weather, a little walk, and sometimes for exercise a game at mall in the meadow, were his only amusements. For all society he had two friends, people of esteem in our town. They lived together in the most peaceful intimacy, seeing each other every day, and every day with the same pleasure in their meeting; and for fulfilment of good fortune, they died within a very little while of each other. I have scarcely ever seen an example of so sweet and constant equality in the course of human life.  
"At this school I had a comrade, who was from my infancy an object of emulation to me. His deliberate and rational bearing, his industry in study, the care he took of his books, on which I never saw a stain; his fair hair always so well combed, his dress always fresh in its simplicity, his linen always white, were to me a constantly visible example; and it is rare that a child inspires another child with such esteem as I had for him. His father was a labourer in a neighbouring village, and well known to mine. I used to walk with his son to see him in his home. How he used to receive us, the white-haired old man,--the good cream! the good brown bread that he gave us! and what happy presages did he not please himself in making for my future life, because of my respect for his old age. Twenty years afterwards, his son and I met at Paris; I recognized in him the same character of prudence and kindness which I had known in him at school, and it has been to me no slight pleasure to name one of his children at baptism.  
"When I was eleven years old, just past, my master judged me fit to enter the fourth class of students; and my father consented, though unwillingly, to take me to the College of Mauriac. His reluctance was wise. I must justify it by giving some account of our household.  
"I was the eldest of many children; my father, a little rigid, but entirely good under his severe manner, loved his wife to idolatry; and well he might! I have never been able to understand how, with the simple education of our little convent at Bort, she had attained so much pleasantness in wit, so much elevation in heart, and a sentiment of propriety so just, pure, and subtle. My good Bishop of Limoges has often spoken to me since, at Paris, with most tender interest, of the letters that my mother wrote in recommending me to him.](61591.docx#chunk9828)

["My father revered her as much as he loved; and blamed her only for her too great tenderness for me: but my grandmother loved me no less. I think I see her yet--the good little old woman! the bright nature that she had! the gentle gaiety! Economist of the house, she presided over its management, and was an example to us all of filial tenderness, for she had also her own mother and her husband's mother to take care of. I am now dating far back, being just able to remember my great-grandmother drinking her little cup of wine at the corner of the hearth; but, during the whole of my childhood, my grandmother and her three sisters lived with us, and among all these women, and a swarm of children, my father stood alone, their support. With little means enough, all could live. Order, economy, and labour,--a little commerce, but above all things, frugality" (Note again the good scholar's accuracy of language: "Economy" the right arrangement of things, "Frugality" the careful and fitting use of them)--"these maintained us all in comfort. The little garden produced vegetables enough for the need of the house; the orchard gave us fruit, and our quinces, apples, and pears, preserved in the honey of our bees, made, during the winter, for the children and old women, the most exquisite breakfasts."  
I interrupt again to explain to you, once for all, a chief principle with me in translation. Marmontel says, "for the children and good old women." Were I quoting the French I would give his exact words, but in translating I miss the word "good," of which I know you are not likely to see the application at the moment. You would not see why the old women should be called good, when the question is only what they had for breakfast. Marmontel means that if they had been bad old women they would have wanted gin and bitters for breakfast, instead of honey-candied quinces; but I can't always stop to tell you Marmontel's meaning, or other people's, and therefore if I think it not likely to strike you, and the word weakens the sentence in the direction I want you to follow, I omit it in translating, as I do also entire sentences, here and there; but never, as aforesaid, in actual quotation.  
"The flock of the fold of St. Thomas, clothed, with its wool, now the women, and now the children; my aunt spun it, and spun also the hemp which made our under-dress; the children of our neighbours came to beat it with us in the evening by lamp-light, (our own walnut trees giving us the oil,) and formed a ravishing picture. The harvest of our little farm assured our subsistence; the wax and honey of our bees, of which one of my aunts took extreme care, were a revenue, with little capital. The oil of our fresh walnuts had flavour and smell, which we liked better than those of the oil-olive, and our cakes of buck-wheat, hot, with the sweet butter of Mont Dor, were for us the most inviting of feasts. By the fireside, in the evening, while we heard the pot boiling with sweet chestnuts in it, our grandmother would roast a quince under the ashes and divide it among us children. The most sober of women made us all gourmands. Thus, in a household, where nothing was ever lost, very little expense supplied all our further wants; the dead wood of the neighbouring forests was in abundance, the fresh mountain butter and most delicate cheese cost little; even wine was not dear, and my father used it soberly."  
That is as much, I suppose, as you will care for at once. Insipid enough, you think?--or perhaps, in one way, too sapid; one's soul and affections mixed up so curiously with quince-marmalade? It is true, the French have a trick of doing that; but why not take it the other way, and say, one's quince-marmalade mixed up with affection? We adulterate our affections in England, now-a-days, with a yellower, harder, baser thing than that; and there would surely be no harm in our confectioners putting a little soul into their sugar,--if they put in nothing worse?  
But as to the simplicity--or, shall we say, wateriness,--of the style, I can answer you more confidently. Milkiness would be a better word, only one does not use it of styles. This writing of Marmontel's is different from the writing you are accustomed to, in that there is never an exaggerating phrase in it--never a needlessly strained or metaphorical word, and never a misapplied one. Nothing is said pithily, to show the author's power, diffusely, to show his observation, nor quaintly, to show his fancy. He is not thinking of himself as an author at all; but of himself as a boy. He is not remembering his native valley as a subject for fine writing, but as a beloved real place, about which he may be garrulous, perhaps, but not rhetorical. But is it, or was it, or could it ever be, a real place, indeed?--you will ask next. Yes, real in the severest sense; with realities that are to last for ever, when this London and Manchester life of yours shall have become a horrible, and, but on evidence, incredible, romance of the past.  
Real, but only partially seen; still more partially told. The rightnesses only perceived; the felicities only remembered; the landscape seen as if spring lasted always; the trees in blossom or fruitage evermore: no shedding of leaf: of winter, nothing remembered but its fireside.  
Yet not untrue. The landscape is indeed there, and the life, seen through glass that dims them, but not distorts; and which is only dim to Evil.](61591.docx#chunk9829)

[But now supply, with your own undimmed insight, and better knowledge of human nature; or invent, with imaginative malice, what evil you think necessary to make the picture true. Still--make the worst of it you will--it cannot but remain somewhat incredible to you, like the pastoral scene in a pantomime, more than a piece of history.  
Well; but the pastoral scene in a pantomime itself,--tell me,--is it meant to be a bright or a gloomy part of your Christmas spectacle? Do you mean it to exhibit, by contrast, the blessedness of your own life in the streets outside; or, for one fond and foolish half-hour, to recall the "ravishing picture" of days long lost? "The sheep-fold of St. Thomas," (you have at least, in him, an incredulous saint, and fit patron of a Republic at once holy and enlightened), the green island full of singing birds, the cascade in the forest, the vines on the steep river-shore;--the little Marmontel reading his Virgil in the shade, with murmur of bees round him in the sunshine;--the fair-haired comrade, so gentle, so reasonable, and, marvel of marvels, beloved for being exemplary! Is all this incredible to you in its good or in its evil? Those children rolling on the heaps of black and slimy ground, mixed with brickbats and broken plates and bottles, in the midst of Preston or Wigan, as edified travellers behold them when the station is blocked, and the train stops anywhere outside,--the children themselves, black, and in rags evermore, and the only water near them either boiling, or gathered in unctuous pools, covered with rancid clots of scum, in the lowest holes of the earth-heaps,--why do you not paint these for pastime? Are they not what your machine gods have produced for you? The mighty iron arms are visibly there at work;--no St. Thomas can be incredulous about the existence of gods such as they,--day and night at work--omnipotent, if not resplendent. Why do you not rejoice in these; appoint a new Christmas for these, in memory of the Nativity of Boilers, and put their realms of black bliss into new Arcadias of pantomime--the harlequin, mask all over? Tell me, my practical friends.  
  
Believe me, faithfully yours,  
JOHN RUSKIN.  
  
  
  
  
NOTES AND CORRESPONDENCE.  
  
I must in future reserve a page, at the end of these Letters, partly for any chance word of correspondence; partly to give account of what I am doing, (when it becomes worth relating,) with the interest of the St. George's Fund.  
To-day I wish only to invite the reader's attention to the notice, which is sent out with each volume of the revised series of my works, that I mean to sell my own books at a price from which there shall be no abatement--namely, 18s. the plain volumes, and 27s. 6d. the illustrated ones; and that my publisher, Mr. G. Allen, Sunnyside, Orpington, Kent, will supply them at that price without abatement, carriage paid, to any person in town or country, on remittance of the price of the number of volumes required.  
This absolute refusal of credit or abatement is only the carrying out of a part of my general method of political economy; and I adopt this system of sale, because I think authors ought not to be too proud to sell their own books, any more than painters to sell their own pictures.  
I intend the retail dealer to charge twenty shillings for the plain volumes, and thirty shillings for the others. If he declines offering them for that percentage, it is for the public to judge how much he gets usually.  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
FORS CLAVIGERA.  
LETTER XV.  
  
Denmark Hill, 1st March, 1872.  
My Friends,  
  
The Tory gentleman whose character I have to sketch for you, in due counterbalance of that story of republican justice in California, was, as I told you, the friend of Friedrich II. of Germany, another great Friedrich preceding the Prussian one by some centuries, and living quite as hard a life of it. But before I can explain to you anything either about him, or his friend, I must develop the statement made above (XI. 6), of the complex modes of injustice respecting the means of maintenance, which have hitherto held in all ages among the three great classes of soldiers, clergy, and peasants. I mean, by 'peasants' the producers of food, out of land or water; by 'clergy,' men who live by teaching or exhibition of behaviour; and by 'soldiers,' those who live by fighting, either by robbing wise peasants, or getting themselves paid by foolish ones. Into these three classes the world's multitudes are essentially hitherto divided. The legitimate merchant of course exists, and can exist, only on the small percentage of pay obtainable for the transfer of goods; and the manufacturer and artist are, in healthy society, developed states of the peasant. The morbid power of manufacture and commerce in our own age is an accidental condition of national decrepitude; the injustices connected with it are mainly those of the gambling-house, and quite unworthy of analytical inquiry; but the unjust relations of the soldier, clergyman, and peasant have hitherto been constant in all great nations;--they are full of mystery and beauty in their iniquity; they require the most subtle, and deserve the most reverent, analysis.  
The first root of distinction between the soldier and peasant is in barrenness and fruitfulness of possessed ground; the inhabitant of sands and rocks "redeeming his share" (see speech of Roderick in the 'Lady of the Lake') from the inhabitant of corn-bearing ground. The second root of it is delight in athletic exercise, resulting in beauty of person and perfectness of race, and causing men to be content, or even triumphant, in accepting continual risk of death, if by such risk they can escape the injury of servile toil.](61591.docx#chunk9830)

[Again, the first root of distinction between clergyman and peasant is the greater intelligence, which instinctively desires both to learn and teach, and is content to accept the smallest maintenance, if it may remain so occupied. (Look back to Marmontel's account of his tutor.)  
The second root of distinction is that which gives rise to the word 'clergy,' properly signifying persons chosen by lot, or in a manner elect, for the practice and exhibition of good behaviour; the visionary or passionate anchorite being content to beg his bread, so only that he may have leave by undisturbed prayer or meditation, to bring himself into closer union with the spiritual world; and the peasant being always content to feed him, on condition of his becoming venerable in that higher state, and, as a peculiarly blessed person, a communicator of blessing.  
Now, both these classes of men remain noble, as long as they are content with daily bread, if they may be allowed to live in their own way; but the moment the one of them uses his strength, and the other his sanctity, to get riches with, or pride of elevation over other men, both of them become tyrants, and capable of any degree of evil. Of the clerk's relation to the peasant, I will only tell you, now, that, as you learn more of the history of Germany and Italy in the Middle Ages, and, indeed, almost to this day, you will find the soldiers of Germany are always trying to get mastery over the body of Italy, and the clerks of Italy are always trying to get mastery over the mind of Germany;--this main struggle between Emperor and Pope, as the respective heads of the two parties, absorbing in its vortex, or attracting to its standards, all the minor disorders and dignities of war; and quartering itself in a quaintly heraldic fashion with the methods of encroachment on the peasant, separately invented by baron and priest.  
The relation of the baron to the peasant, however, is all that I can touch upon to-day; and first, note that this word 'baron' is the purest English you can use to denote the soldier, soldato, or 'fighter, hired with pence, or soldi,' as such. Originally it meant the servant of a soldier, or, as a Roman clerk of Nero's time [7] tells us, (the literary antipathy thus early developing itself in its future nest,) "the extreme fool, who is a fool's servant;" but soon it came to be associated with a Greek word meaning 'heavy;' and so got to signify heavy-handed, or heavy-armed, or generally prevailing in manhood. For some time it was used to signify the authority of a husband; a woman called herself her husband's [8] 'ancilla,' (handmaid), and him her 'baron.' Finally the word got settled in the meaning of a strong fighter receiving regular pay. "Mercenaries are persons who serve for a regularly received pay; the same are called 'Barones' from the Greek, because they are strong in labours." This is the definition given by an excellent clerk of the seventh century, Isidore, Bishop of Seville, and I wish you to recollect it, because it perfectly unites the economical idea of a Baron, as a person paid for fighting, with the physical idea of one, as prevailing in battle by weight; not without some attached idea of slight stupidity;--the notion holding so distinctly even to this day that Mr. Matthew Arnold thinks the entire class aptly describable under the term 'barbarians.'  
At all events, the word is the best general one for the dominant rank of the Middle Ages, as distinguished from the pacific peasant, and so delighting in battle that one of the most courteous barons of the fourteenth century tells a young knight who comes to him for general advice, that the moment war fails in any country, he must go into another.  
  
"Et se la guerre est faillie, Departie Fay tost de cellui pais; N'arreste quoy que nul die."  
"And if the war has ended, Departure Make quickly from that country; Do not stop, whatever anybody says to you." [9]  
  
But long before this class distinction was clearly established, the more radical one between pacific and warrior nations had shown itself cruelly in the history of Europe.  
You will find it greatly useful to fix in your minds these following elementary ideas of that history:--  
The Roman Empire was already in decline at the birth of Christ. It was ended five hundred years afterwards. The wrecks of its civilization, mingled with the broken fury of the tribes which had destroyed it, were then gradually softened and purged by Christianity; and hammered into shape by three great warrior nations, on the north, south, and west, worshippers of the storms, of the sun, and of fate. Three Christian kings, Henry the Fowler in Germany, Charlemagne in France, and Alfred in England, typically represent the justice of humanity, gradually forming the feudal system out of the ruined elements of Roman luxury and law, under the disciplining torment inflicted by the mountaineers of Scandinavia, India, and Arabia.  
This forging process takes another five hundred years. Christian feudalism may be considered as definitely organized at the end of the tenth century, and its political strength established, having for the most part absorbed the soldiers of the north, and soon to be aggressive on those of Mount Imaus and Mount Sinai. It lasts another five hundred years, and then our own epoch, that of atheistic liberalism, begins, practically necessitated,--the liberalism by the two discoveries of gunpowder and printing,--and the atheism by the unfortunate persistence of the clerks in teaching children what they cannot understand, and employing young consecrated persons to assert in pulpits what they do not know.  
That is enough generalization for you to-day. I want now to fix your thoughts on one small point in all this;--the effect of the discovery of gunpowder in promoting liberalism.](61591.docx#chunk9831)

[Its first operation was to destroy the power of the baron, by rendering it impossible for him to hold his castle, with a few men, against a mob. The fall of the Bastile is a typical fact in history of this kind; but, of course long previously, castellated architecture had been felt to be useless. Much other building of a noble kind vanishes together with it; nor less (which is a much greater loss than the building,) the baronial habit of living in the country.  
Next to his castle, the baron's armour becomes useless to him; and all the noble habits of life vanish which depend on the wearing of a distinctive dress, involving the constant exercise of accurately disciplined strength, and the public assertion of an exclusive occupation in life, involving exposure to danger.  
Next, the baron's sword and spear become useless to him; and encounter, no longer the determination of who is best man, but of who is best marksman, which is a very different question indeed.  
Lastly, the baron being no more able to maintain his authority by force, seeks to keep it by form; he reduces his own subordinates to a fine machinery, and obtains the command of it by purchase or intrigue. The necessity of distinction of character is in war so absolute, and the tests of it are so many, that, in spite of every abuse, good officers get sometimes the command of squadrons or of ships; and one good officer in a hundred is enough to save the honour of an army, and the credit of a system: but generally speaking, our officers at this day do not know their business; and the result is--that, paying thirty millions a year for our army, we are informed by Mr. Grant Duff that the army we have bought is of no use, and we must pay still more money to produce any effect upon foreign affairs. So, you see, this is the actual state of things,--and it is the perfection of liberalism,--that first we cannot buy a Raphael for five-and-twenty pounds, because we have to pay five hundred for a pocket pistol; and next, we are coolly told that the pocket pistol won't go off, and that we must still pay foreign constables to keep the peace.  
In old times, under the pure baronial power, things used, as I told you, to be differently managed by us. We were, all of us, in some sense barons; and paid ourselves for fighting. We had no pocket pistols, nor Woolwich Infants--nothing but bows and spears, good horses, (I hear, after two-thirds of our existing barons have ruined their youth in horseracing, and a good many of them their fortunes also, we are now in irremediable want of horses for our cavalry,) and bright armour. Its brightness, observe, was an essential matter with us. Last autumn I saw, even in modern England, something bright; low sunshine at six o'clock of an October morning, glancing down a long bank of fern covered with hoar-frost, in Yewdale, at the head of Coniston Water. I noted it as more beautiful than anything I had ever seen, to my remembrance, in gladness and infinitude of light. Now, Scott uses this very image to describe the look of the chain-mail of a soldier in one of these free [10] companies;--Le Balafre, Quentin Durward's uncle:--"The archer's gorget, arm-pieces, and gauntlets were of the finest steel, curiously inlaid with silver, and his hauberk, or shirt of mail, was as clear and bright as the frost-work of a winter morning upon fern or briar." And Sir John Hawkwood's men, of whose proceedings in Italy I have now to give you some account, were named throughout Italy, as I told you in my first letter, the White Company of English,--'Societas alba Anglicorum,' or generally, the Great White Company, merely from the splendour of their arms. They crossed the Alps in 1361, and immediately caused a curious change in the Italian language. Azario lays great stress on their tall spears with a very long iron point at the extremity; this formidable weapon being for the most part wielded by two, and sometimes moreover by three individuals, being so heavy and huge, that whatever it came in contact with was pierced through and through. He says, that [11] "at their backs the mounted bowmen carried their bows; whilst those used by the infantry archers were so enormous that the long arrows discharged from them were shot with one end of the bow resting on the ground instead of being drawn in the air."  
Of the English bow you have probably heard before, though I shall have, both of it, and the much inferior Greek bow made of two goats' horns, to tell you some things that may not have come in your way; but the change these English caused in the Italian language, and afterwards generally in that of chivalry, was by their use of the spear; for "Filippo Villani tells us that, whereas, until the English company crossed the Alps, his countrymen numbered their military forces by 'helmets' and colour companies, (bandiere); thenceforth armies were reckoned by the spear, a weapon which, when handled by the White Company, proved no less tremendous than the English bayonet of modern times."  
It is worth noting as one of the tricks of the third Fors--the giver of names as well as fortunes--that the name of the chief poet of passionate Italy should have been 'the bearer of the wing,' and that of the chief poet of practical England, the bearer or shaker of the spear. Noteworthy also that Shakespeare himself gives a name to his type of the false soldier from the pistol; but, in the future, doubtless we shall have a hero of culminating soldierly courage named from the torpedo, and a poet of the commercial period, singing the wars directed by Mr. Grant Duff, named Shake-purse.](61591.docx#chunk9832)

[The White Company when they crossed the Alps were under a German captain. (Some years before, an entirely German troop was prettily defeated by the Apennine peasants.) Sir John Hawkwood did not take the command until 1364, when the Pisans hired the company, five thousand strong, at the rate of a hundred and fifty thousand golden florins for six months. I think about fifty thousand pounds of our money a month, or ten pounds a man--Sir John himself being then described as a "great general," an Englishman of a vulpine nature, "and astute in their fashion." This English fashion of astuteness means, I am happy to say, that Sir John saw far, planned deeply, and was cunning in military stratagem; but would neither poison his enemies nor sell his friends--the two words of course being always understood as for the time being;--for, from this year 1364 for thirty years onward, he leads his gradually more and more powerful soldier's life, fighting first for one town and then for another; here for bishops, and there for barons, but mainly for those merchants of Florence, from whom that narrow street in your city is named Lombard Street, and interfering thus so decidedly with foreign affairs, that, at the end of the thirty years, when he put off his armour, and had lain resting for a little while in Florence Cathedral, King Richard the Second begged his body from the Florentines, and laid it in his own land; the Florentines granting it in the terms of this following letter:--  
  
"To the King of England.  
"Most serene and invincible Sovereign, most dread Lord, and our very especial Benefactor--  
"Our devotion can deny nothing to your Highness' Eminence: there is nothing in our power which we would not strive by all means to accomplish, should it prove grateful to you.  
"Wherefore, although we should consider it glorious for us and our people to possess the dust and ashes of the late valiant knight, nay, most renowned captain, Sir John Hawkwood, who fought most gloriously for us, as the commander of our armies, and whom at the public expense we caused to be entombed in the Cathedral Church of our city; yet, notwithstanding, according to the form of the demand, that his remains may be taken back to his country, we freely concede the permission, lest it be said that your sublimity asked anything in vain, or fruitlessly, of our reverential humility.  
"We, however, with due deference, and all possible earnestness, recommend to your Highness' graciousness, the son and posterity of said Sir John, who acquired no mean repute, and glory for the English name in Italy, as also our merchants and citizens."  
  
It chanced by the appointment of the third Fors, [12] to which, you know, I am bound in these letters uncomplainingly to submit, that, just as I had looked out this letter for you, given at Florence in the year 1396, I found in an old bookshop two gazettes, nearly three hundred years later, namely, Number 20 of the 'Mercurius Publicus,' and Number 50 of the 'Parliamentary Intelligencer,' the latter comprising the same "foraign intelligence, with the affairs now in agitation in England, Scotland, and Ireland, for information of the people. Publish'd by order, from Monday, December 3rd, to Monday, December 10th, 1660." This little gazette informs us in its first advertisement, that in London, November 30th, 1660, was lost, in or about this city, a small paper book of accounts and receipts, with a red leather cover, with two clasps on it; and that anybody that can give intelligence of it to the city crier at Bread Street end in Cheapside, "shall have five shillings for their pains, and more if they desire it." And its last paragraph is as follows:--"On Saturday (December 8), the Most Honourable House of Peers concurred with the Commons in the order for the digging up the carkasses of Oliver Cromwell, Henry Ireton, John Bradshaw, and Thomas Pride, and carrying them on an Hurdle to Tyburn, where they are to be first hang'd up in their Coffins, and then buried under the Gallows."  
The 'Public Mercury' is of date Thursday, June 14th, to Thursday, June 21st, 1660, and contains a report of the proceedings at the House of Commons, on Saturday, the 16th, of which the first sentence is:--  
  
"Resolved,--That his Majesty be humbly moved to call in Milton's two books, and John Goodwin's, and order them to be burnt by the common hangman."  
  
By the final appointment of the third Fors, I chanced just after finding these gazettes, to come upon the following passage in my 'Daily Telegraph':--  
  
"Every head was uncovered, and although among those who were farthest off there was a pressing forward and a straining to catch sight of the coffin, there was nothing unseemly or rude. The Catafalque was received at the top of the stairs by Col. Braine and other officers of the 9th, and placed in the centre of the vestibule on a rich velvet pall on which rested crowns, crosses, and other devices, composed of tuberoses and camellias, while beautiful lilies were scattered over the corpse, which was clothed in full regimentals, the cap and sword resting on the body. The face, with the exception of its pallor, was unchanged, and no one, unless knowing the circumstances, would have believed that Fiske had died a violent death. The body was contained in a handsome rosewood casket, with gold-plated handles, and a splendid plate bearing the inscription, 'James Fiske, jun., died January 7th, 1872, in the 37th year of his age.'"](61591.docx#chunk9833)

[In the foregoing passages, you see, there is authentic account given you of the various honours rendered by the enlightened public of the fourteenth, seventeenth, and nineteenth centuries to the hero of their day or hour; the persons thus reverenced in their burial, or unburial, being all, by profession, soldiers; and holding rank in that profession, very properly describable by the pretty modern English word 'Colonel'--leader, that is to say, of a Coronel, Coronella, or daisy-like circlet of men; as in the last case of the three before us, of the Tammany 'Ring.'  
You are to observe, however, that the first of the three, Colonel Sir John Hawkwood, is a soldier both in heart and deed, every inch of him; and that the second, Colonel Oliver Cromwell, was a soldier in deed, but not in heart; being by natural disposition and temper fitted rather for a Huntingdonshire farmer, and not at all caring to make any money by his military business; and finally, that Colonel James Fiske, jun., was a soldier in heart, to the extent of being willing to receive any quantity of soldi from any paymaster, but no more a soldier in deed than you are yourselves, when you go piping and drumming past my gate at Denmark Hill (I should rather say--banging, than drumming, for I observe you hit equally hard and straightforward to every tune; so that from a distance it sounds just like beating carpets), under the impression that you are defending your country as well as amusing yourselves.  
Of the various honours, deserved or undeserved, done by enlightened public opinion to these three soldiers, I leave you to consider till next month, merely adding, to put you more entirely in command of the facts, that Sir John Hawkwood, (Acuto, the Italians called him, by happy adaptation of syllables,) whose entire subsistence was one of systematic military robbery, had, when he was first buried, the honour, rarely granted even to the citizens of Florence, of having his coffin laid on the font of the House of his name-saint, St. John Baptist--that same font which Dante was accused of having impiously broken to save a child from drowning, in "mio bel San Giovanni." I am soon going to Florence myself to draw this beautiful San Giovanni for the beginning of my lectures on Architecture, at Oxford; and you shall have a print of the best sketch I can make, to assist your meditations on the honours of soldiership, and efficacy of baptism. Meantime, let me ask you to read an account of one funeral more, and to meditate also on that. It is given in the most exquisite and finished piece which I know of English Prose literature in the eighteenth century; and, however often you may have seen it already, I beg of you to read it now, both in connection with the funeral ceremonies described hitherto, and for the sake of its educational effect on your own taste in writing:--  
  
"We last night received a piece of ill news at our club, which very sensibly afflicted every one of us. I question not but my readers themselves will be troubled at the hearing of it. To keep them no longer in suspense, Sir Roger de Coverley is dead. He departed this life at his house in the country, after a few weeks' sickness. Sir Andrew Freeport has a letter from one of his correspondents in those parts, that informs him the old man caught a cold at the county-sessions, as he was very warmly promoting an address of his own penning, in which he succeeded according to his wishes. But this particular comes from a Whig justice of peace, who was always Sir Roger's enemy and antagonist. I have letters both from the chaplain and Captain Sentry, which mention nothing of it, but are filled with many particulars to the honour of the good old man. I have likewise a letter from the butler, who took so much care of me last summer when I was at the knight's house. As my friend the butler mentions, in the simplicity of his heart, several circumstances the others have passed over in silence, I shall give my reader a copy of his letter, without any alteration or diminution.](61591.docx#chunk9834)

["'Honoured Sir,--Knowing that you was my old master's good friend, I could not forbear sending you the melancholy news of his death, which has afflicted the whole country, as well as his poor servants, who loved him, I may say, better than we did our lives. I am afraid he caught his death the last county-sessions, where he would go to see justice done to a poor widow woman, and her fatherless children, that had been wronged by a neighbouring gentleman; for you know, Sir, my good master was always the poor man's friend. Upon his coming home, the first complaint he made was, that he had lost his roast-beef stomach, not being able to touch a sirloin, which was served up according to custom: and you know he used to take great delight in it. From that time forward he grew worse and worse, but still kept a good heart to the last. Indeed we were once in great hope of his recovery, upon a kind message that was sent him from the widow lady whom he had made love to the forty last years of his life; but this only proved a lightning before death. He has bequeathed to this lady, as a token of his love, a great pearl necklace, and a couple of silver bracelets set with jewels, which belonged to my good old lady his mother. He has bequeathed the fine white gelding that he used to ride a hunting upon, to his chaplain, because he thought he would be kind to him, and has left you all his books. He has moreover bequeathed to the chaplain a very pretty tenement with good lands about it. It being a very cold day when he made his will, he left for mourning to every man in the parish, a great frize-coat, and to every woman a black riding-hood. It was a most moving sight to see him take leave of his poor servants, commending us all for our fidelity, whilst we were not able to speak a word for weeping. As we most of us are grown grey-headed in our dear master's service, he has left us pensions and legacies, which we may live very comfortably upon the remaining part of our days. He has bequeathed a great deal more in charity, which is not yet come to my knowledge, and it is peremptorily said in the parish, that he has left money to build a steeple to the church; for he was heard to say some time ago, that if he lived two years longer, Coverley church should have a steeple to it. The chaplain tells every body that he made a very good end, and never speaks of him without tears. He was buried, according to his own directions, among the family of the Coverleys, on the left hand of his father Sir Arthur. The coffin was carried by six of his tenants, and the pall held up by six of the quorum. The whole parish followed the corpse with heavy hearts, and in their mourning suits; the men in frize, and the women in riding-hoods. Captain Sentry, my master's nephew, has taken possession of the Hall-house, and the whole estate. When my old master saw him a little before his death, he took him by the hand, and wished him joy of the estate which was falling to him, desiring him only to make a good use of it, and to pay the several legacies, and the gifts of charity, which he told him he had left as quit-rents upon the estate. The captain truly seems a courteous man, though he says but little. He makes much of those whom my master loved, and shews great kindness to the old house-dog, that you know my poor master was so fond of. It would have gone to your heart to have heard the moans the dumb creature made on the day of my master's death. He has never enjoyed himself since; no more has any of us. It was the melancholiest day for the poor people that ever happened in Worcestershire. This is all from,  
"'Honoured Sir,  
"'Your most sorrowful servant,  
"'Edward Biscuit.  
"'P.S. My master desired, some weeks before he died, that a book, which comes up to you by the carrier, should be given to Sir Andrew Freeport in his name.'  
  
"This letter, notwithstanding the poor butler's manner of writing it, gave us such an idea of our good old friend, that upon the reading of it there was not a dry eye in the club. Sir Andrew opening the book, found it to be a collection of acts of parliament. There was in particular the Act of Uniformity, with some passages in it marked by Sir Roger's own hand. Sir Andrew found that they related to two or three points which he had disputed with Sir Roger the last time he appeared at the club. Sir Andrew, who would have been merry at such an incident on another occasion, at the sight of the old man's hand-writing burst into tears, and put the book into his pocket. Captain Sentry informs me that the knight has left rings and mourning for every one in the club."  
  
I am obliged to give you this ideal of Addison's because I can neither from my own knowledge, nor, at this moment, out of any domestic chronicles I remember, give you so perfect an account of the funeral of an English squire who has lived an honourable life in peace. But Addison is as true as truth itself. So now, meditate over these four funerals, and the meaning and accuracy of the public opinions they express, till I can write again.  
  
And believe me, ever faithfully yours,  
JOHN RUSKIN.  
  
  
  
  
NOTES AND CORRESPONDENCE.](61591.docx#chunk9835)

[A cutting was sent me the other day, from a provincial paper, apparently well meant and conducted, but which in its column of 'aphorisms,' having, unfortunately, ventured to lead off with one on political economy, enunciated itself as follows:--  
  
"All capital comes back at last, though sometimes by a roundabout road, to the pocket of the labourer, in the shape of wages. Consumable produce, however, may be dissipated in a thousand ways, in none of which is either the capitalist or the proletaire benefited at all."  
  
I don't happen to know, at this moment, what a 'proletaire' is, and can't find it in my French dictionary; but will ascertain, by next month; and, meantime, I keep the 'aphorism,' being a very curious one, for future comment.  
  
  
A letter from "a working woman" has given me much pleasure. She says she does not understand my plans; but can trust me. She may be pleased to know that I don't yet understand some of my plans myself, for they are not, strictly speaking, mine at all, but Nature's and Heaven's, which are not always comprehensible, until one begins to act on them. Then they clear as one goes on, and, I hope, my expression of what I can see of them, for her, and all true workers, will, also.  
I have an interesting letter from Glasgow, but have not been able to read it yet. A slip of the 'Glasgow Chronicle' was enclosed, containing the Editor's opinions on my modes of selling my books. Not having any occasion for his opinions on the subject, I threw the slip into the fire. The letter, which I have just glanced at, says my comparison of the price of my books to a doctor's fee is absurd, for the poor don't pay guinea fees. I know that, and I don't want any poor people to read my books. I said so long ago, in 'Sesame.' I want them to read these letters, which they can get, each for the price of two pots of beer; and not to read my large books, nor anybody else's, till they are rich enough, at least, to pay for good printing and binding. Even oracular Mr. Grant Duff says they are all to be rich first, and only next to be intelligent, and I am happy in supposing it needs a great deal of intelligence to read 'Modern Painters.' But, by the way, if the Editor of the 'Glasgow Chronicle' will tell me, why, in these fine manufacturing counties of his, and mine, I can only, with the greatest possible difficulty, or by mere good luck, and help of the Third Fors, now get a quarter of a yard of honest leather to stitch my leaves into, I shall be greatly obliged to him, and will reprint his communication in my best type, instead of throwing it into the fire.  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
FORS CLAVIGERA.  
LETTER XVI.  
  
Denmark Hill, 15th March, 1872.  
My Friends,  
  
The meditation I asked you to give to the facts put before you in my last letter, if given, should have convinced you, for one thing, quite sufficiently for all your future needs, of the unimportance of momentary public opinion respecting the characters of men; and for another thing, of the preciousness of confirmed public opinion, when it happens to be right;--preciousness both to the person opined of, and the opiners;--as, for instance, to Sir Roger de Coverley, the opinion formed of him by his tenants and club: and for third thing, it might have properly led you to consider, though it was scarcely probable your thoughts should have turned that way, what an evil trick of human creatures it was to reserve the expression of these opinions--or even the examination of them, until the persons to be opined of are dead; and then to endeavour to put all right by setting their coffins on baptistery fonts--or hanging them up at Tyburn. Let me very strongly advise you to make up your minds concerning people, while they are with you; to honour and obey those whom you consider good ones; to dishonour and disobey those whom you consider bad ones; and when good and bad ones die, to make no violent or expressive demonstrations of the feelings which have now become entirely useless to the persons concerned, and are only, as they are true or false, serviceable, or the contrary, to yourselves; but to take care that some memorial is kept of men who deserve memory, in a distinct statement on the stone or brass of their tombs, either that they were true men, or rascals,--wise men, or fools.  
How beautiful the variety of sepulchral architecture might be, in any extensive place of burial, if the public would meet the small expense of thus expressing its opinions, in a verily instructive manner; and if some of the tombstones accordingly terminated in fools' caps; and others, instead of crosses or cherubs, bore engravings of cats-of-nine-tails, as typical of the probable methods of entertainment, in the next world, of the persons, not, it is to be hoped, reposing, below.  
But the particular subject led up to in my last letter, and which, in this special month of April, I think it appropriate for you to take to heart, is the way in which you spend your money, or allow it to be spent for you. Colonel Hawkwood and Colonel Fiske both passed their whole lives in getting possession, by various means, of other people's money; (in the final fact, of working-men's money,--yours, that is to say), and everybody praises and crowns them for doing so. Colonel Cromwell passes his life in fighting for, what in the gist of it meant, not freedom, but freedom from unjust taxation;--and you hang his coffin up at Tyburn.](61591.docx#chunk9836)

["Not Freedom, but deliverance from unjust taxation." You call me unpractical. Suppose you became practical enough yourselves to take that for a watchword for a little while, and see how near you can come to its realization.  
For, I very positively can inform you, the considerablest part of the misery of the world comes of the tricks of unjust taxation. All its evil passions--pride, lust, revenge, malice, and sloth,--derive their main deadliness from the facilities of getting hold of other people's money open to the persons they influence. Pay every man for his work,--pay nobody but for his work,--and see that the work be sound; and you will find pride, lust, and sloth have little room left for themselves.  
Observe, however, very carefully, that by unjust taxation, I do not mean merely Chancellor of Exchequer's business, but a great part of what really very wise and worthy gentlemen, but, unfortunately, proud also, suppose to be their business.  
For instance, before beginning my letter to you this morning, (the last I shall ever date from Denmark Hill, [13]) I put out of my sight, carefully, under a large book, a legal document, which disturbed me by its barbarous black lettering. This is an R  
  
[Corrupted handwritten R.]  
  
in it, for instance, which is ugly enough, as such; but how ugly is the significance of it, and reasons of its being written that way, instead of in a properly intelligible way, there is hardly vituperation enough in language justly to express to you. This said document is to release the sole remaining executor of my father's will from further responsibility for the execution of it. And all that there is really need for, of English scripture on the occasion, would be as follows:--  
I, having received this 15th of March, 1822, from A. B., Esq., all the property which my father left, hereby release A. B., Esq., from future responsibility, respecting either my father's property, or mine, or my father's business, or mine. Signed, J. R., before such and such two witnesses.  
This document, on properly cured calf-skin, (not cleaned by acids), and written as plainly as, after having contracted some careless literary habits, I could manage to write it, ought to answer the purpose required, before any court of law on earth.  
In order to effect it in a manner pleasing to the present legal mind of England, I receive eighty-seven lines of close writing, containing from fourteen to sixteen words each, (one thousand two hundred and eighteen words in all, at the minimum); thirteen of them in black letters of the lovely kind above imitated, but produced with much pains by the scrivener. Of the manner in which this overplus of one thousand one hundred and seventy-eight words is accomplished, (my suggested form containing forty only), the following example--the last clause of the document--may suffice.  
"And the said J. R. doth hereby for himself his heirs executors and administrators covenant and agree with and to the said A. B. his executors and administrators that he the said J. R. his heirs executors administrators or assigns shall and will from time to time and at all times hereafter save harmless and keep indemnified the said A. B. his heirs executors administrators and assigns from and in respect of all claims and demands whatsoever which may be made upon him or them or any of them for or in respect of the real or personal estate of the said J. R. and from all suits costs charges and damages and expenses whatsoever which the said A. B. his heirs executors administrators or assigns shall be involved in or put unto for or in respect of the said real or personal estate or any part thereof."  
Now, what reason do you suppose there is for all this barbarism and bad grammar, and tax upon my eyes and time, for very often one has actually to read these things, or hear them read, all through? The reason is simply and wholly that I may be charged so much per word, that the lawyer and his clerk may live. But do you not see how infinitely advantageous it would be for me, (if only I could get the other sufferers under this black literature to be of my mind), to clap the lawyer and his clerk, once for all, fairly out of the way in a dignified almshouse, with parchment unlimited, and ink turned on at a tap, and maintenance for life, on the mere condition of their never troubling humanity more, with either their scriptures or opinions on any subject; and to have this release of mine, as above worded, simply confirmed by the signature of any person whom the Queen might appoint for that purpose, (say the squire of the parish), and there an end? How is it, do you think, that other sufferers under the black literature do not come to be of my mind, which was Cicero's mind also, and has been the mind of every sane person before Cicero and since Cicero,--so that we might indeed get it ended thus summarily?  
Well, at the root of all these follies and iniquities, there lies always one tacit, but infinitely strong persuasion in the British mind, namely, that somehow money grows out of nothing, if one can only find some expedient to produce an article that must be paid for. "Here," the practical Englishman says to himself, "I produce, being capable of nothing better, an entirely worthless piece of parchment, with one thousand two hundred entirely foolish words upon it, written in an entirely abominable hand; and by this production of mine, I conjure out of the vacant air, the substance of ten pounds, or the like. What an infinitely profitable transaction to me and to the world! Creation, out of a chaos of words, and a dead beast's hide, of this beautiful and omnipotent ten pounds. Do I not see with my own eyes that this is very good?"](61591.docx#chunk9837)

[That is the real impression on the existing popular mind; silent, but deep, and for the present unconquerable. That by due parchment, calligraphy, and ingenious stratagem, money may be conjured out of the vacant air. Alchemy is, indeed, no longer included in our list of sciences, for alchemy proposed,--irrational science that it was,--to make money of something;--gold of lead, or the like. But to make money of nothing,--this appears to be manifoldly possible, to the modern Anglo-Saxon practical person,--instructed by Mr. John Stuart Mill. Sometimes, with rare intelligence, he is capable of carrying the inquiry one step farther. Pushed hard to assign a Providential cause for such legal documents as this we are talking of, an English gentleman would say: "Well, of course, where property needs legal forms to transfer it, it must be in quantity enough to bear a moderate tax without inconvenience; and this tax on its transfer enables many well-educated and agreeable persons to live."  
Yes, that is so, and I (speaking for the nonce in the name of the working-man, maker of property) am willing enough to be taxed, straightforwardly, for the maintenance of these most agreeable persons; but not to be taxed obliquely for it, nor teased, either obliquely or otherwise, for it. I greatly and truly admire (as aforesaid, in my first letter,) these educated persons in wigs; and when I go into my kitchen-garden in spring time, to see the dew on my early sprouts, I often mentally acknowledge the fitness, yet singularity, of the arrangement by which I am appointed to grow mute Broccoli for the maintenance of that talking Broccoli. All that I want of it is to let itself be kept for a show, and not to tax my time as well as my money.  
Kept for a show, of heads; or, to some better purpose, for writing on fair parchment, with really well-trained hands, what might be desirable of literature. Suppose every existing lawyer's clerk was trained, in a good drawing school, to write red and blue letters as well as black ones, in a loving and delicate manner; here for instance is an R and a number eleven, which begin the eleventh chapter of Job in one of my thirteenth-century Bibles. There is as good a letter and as good a number--every one different in design,--to every chapter, and beautifully gilded and painted ones to the beginning of books; all done for love, and teasing nobody. Now suppose the lawyer's clerks, thus instructed to write decently, were appointed to write for us, for their present pay, words really worth setting down--Nursery Songs, Grimm's Popular Stories, and the like, we should have again, not, perhaps, a cheap literature; but at least an innocent one. Dante's words might then be taken up literally by relieved mankind. "Piu ridon le carte." "The papers smile more," they might say, of such transfigured legal documents.  
Not a cheap literature, even then; nor pleasing to my friend the 'Glasgow Herald,' who writes to me indignantly, but very civilly, (and I am obliged to him,) to declare that he is a Herald, and not a Chronicle. I am delighted to hear it; for my lectures on heraldry are just beginning at Oxford, and a Glaswegian opinion may be useful to me, when I am not sure of my blazon. Also he tells me good leather may be had in Glasgow. Let Glasgow flourish, and I will assuredly make trial of the same: but touching this cheap literature question, I cannot speak much in this letter, for I must keep to our especial subject of April--this Fools' Paradise of Cloud-begotten Gold.  
Cloud-begotten--and self-begotten--as some would have it. But it is not so, friends.  
Do you remember the questioning to Job? The pretty letter R stopped me just now at the Response of Zophar; but look on to the thirty-eighth chapter, and read down to the question concerning this April time:--"Hath the rain a Father--and who hath begotten the drops of dew,--the hoary Frost of Heaven--who hath gendered it?"  
That rain and frost of heaven; and the earth which they loose and bind: these, and the labour of your hands to divide them, and subdue, are your wealth, for ever--unincreasable. The fruit of Earth, and its waters, and its light--such as the strength of the pure rock can grow--such as the unthwarted sun in his season brings--these are your inheritance. You can diminish it, but cannot increase: that your barns should be filled with plenty--your presses burst with new wine,--is your blessing; and every year--when it is full--it must be new; and every year, no more.  
And this money, which you think so multipliable, is only to be increased in the hands of some, by the loss of others. The sum of it, in the end, represents, and can represent, only what is in the barn and winepress. It may represent less, but cannot more.  
These ten pounds, for instance, which I am grumbling at having to pay my lawyer--what are they? whence came they?  
They were once, (and could be nothing now, unless they had been) so many skins of Xeres wine--grown and mellowed by pure chalk rock and unafflicted sunshine. Wine drunk, indeed, long ago--but the drinkers gave the vineyard dressers these tokens, which we call pounds, signifying, that having had so much good from them they would return them as much, in future time. And, indeed, for my ten pounds, if my lawyer didn't take it, I could still get my Xeres, if Xeres wine exists anywhere. But, if not, what matters it how many pounds I have, or think I have, or you either? It is meat and drink we want--not pounds.](61591.docx#chunk9838)

[As you are beginning to discover--I fancy too many of you, in this rich country. If you only would discover it a little faster, and demand dinners, instead of Liberty! For what possible liberty do you want, which does not depend on dinner? Tell me, once for all, what is it you want to do, that you can't do? Dinner being provided, do you think the Queen will interfere with the way you choose to spend your afternoons, if only you knock nobody down, and break nobody's windows? But the need of dinner enslaves you to purpose!  
On reading the letter spoken of in my last correspondence sheet, I find that it represents this modern form of slavery with an unconscious clearness, which is very interesting. I have, therefore, requested the writer's permission to print it, and, with a passage or two omitted, and briefest comment, here it is in full type, for it is worth careful reading:--  
  
Glasgow, 12th February, 1872.  
"Sir,  
"You say in your 'Fors' that you do not want any one to buy your books who will not give a 'doctor's fee' per volume, which you rate at 10s. 6d.; now, as the 'Herald' remarks, you are clearly placing yourself in a wrong position, as you arbitrarily fix your doctor's fee far too high; indeed, while you express a desire, no doubt quite sincerely, to elevate the working-man, morally, mentally, and physically, you in the meantime absolutely preclude him from purchasing your books at all, and so almost completely bar his way from the enjoyment and elevating influence of perhaps the most" [etc., complimentary terms--omitted].  
"Permit me a personal remark:--I am myself a poorly paid clerk, with a salary not much over the income-tax minimum; now no doctor, here at least, would ever think of charging me a fee of 10s. 6d., and so you see it is as much out of my power to purchase your books as any working-man. While Mr. Carlyle is just now issuing a cheap edition of his Works at 2s. per volume, which I can purchase, here, quite easily for 1s. 6d.;" [Presumably, therefore, to be had, as far north as Inverness, for a shilling, and for sixpence in Orkney,] "I must say it is a great pity that a Writer so much, and, in my poor opinion, justly, appreciated as yourself, should as it were inaugurate with your own hands a system which thoroughly barriers your productions from the great majority of the middle and working classes. I take leave, however, to remark that I by no means shut my eyes to the anomalies of the Bookselling Trade, but I can't see that it can be remedied by an Author becoming his own Bookseller, and, at the same time, putting an unusually high price on his books. Of course, I would like to see an Author remunerated as highly as possible for his labours." [You ought not to like any such thing: you ought to like an author to get what he deserves, like other people, not more, nor less.] "I would also crave to remark, following up your unfortunate analogy of the doctor's fee, that doctors who have acquired, either professionally or otherwise, a competence, often, nay very often, give their advice gratis to nearly every class, except that which is really wealthy; at least, I speak from my own experience, having known, nay even been attended by such a benevolent physician in a little town in Kirkcudbrightshire, who, when offered payment, and I was both quite able and willing to do so, and he was in no way indebted or obliged to me or mine, positively declined to receive any fee. So much for the benevolent physician and his fees.  
"Here am I, possessed of a passionate love of nature in all her aspects, cooped up in this fearfully crammed mass of population, with its filthy Clyde, which would naturally have been a noble river, but, under the curse of our much belauded civilization, forsooth, turned into an almost stagnant loathsome ditch, pestilence-breathing, be-lorded over by hundreds upon hundreds of tall brick chimney-stacks vomiting up smoke unceasingly; and from the way I am situated, there are only one day and a half in the week in which I can manage a walk into the country; now, if I wished to foster my taste for the beautiful in nature and art, even while living a life of almost servile red-taped routine beneath the too frequently horror-breathing atmosphere of a huge overgrown plutocratic city like Glasgow, I cannot have your Works" [complimentary terms again] "as, after providing for my necessaries, I cannot indulge in books at 10s. 6d. a volume. Of course, as you may say" [My dear sir, the very last thing I should say], "I can get them from a library. Assuredly, but one (at least I would) wishes to have actual and ever-present possession of productions such as yours" [more compliments]. "You will be aware, no doubt, that 'Geo. Eliot' has adopted a 'new system' in publishing her new novel by issuing it in 5s. 'parts,' with the laudable view of enabling and encouraging readers to buy the work for themselves, and not trusting to get it from 'some Mudie' or another for a week, then galloping through the three volumes and immediately forgetting the whole matter. When I possess a book worth having I always recur to it now and again. Your 'new system,' however, tends to prevent the real reading public from ever possessing your books, and the wealthy classes who could afford to buy books at 10s. 6d. a volume, as a rule, I opine, don't drive themselves insane by much reading of any kind.](61591.docx#chunk9839)

["I beg a last remark and I've done. Glasgow, for instance, has no splendid public buildings. She has increased in wealth till I believe there are some of the greatest merchants in the world trading in her Exchange; but except her grand old Cathedral, founded by an almost-forgotten bishop in the twelfth century, in what we in our vain folly are pleased to call the dark ages, when we ourselves are about as really dark as need be; having no 'high calling' to strive for, except by hook or by crook to make money--a fortune--retire at thirty-five by some stroke of gambling of a highly questionable kind on the Share market or otherwise, to a suburban or country villa with Turkey carpets, a wine-cellar and a carriage and pair; as no man now-a-days is ever content with making a decent and honest livelihood. Truly a very 'high calling!' Our old Cathedral, thank God, was not built by contract or stock-jobbing: there was, surely, a higher calling of some sort in those quiet, old, unhurrying days. Our local plutocratic friends put their hands into their pockets to the extent of 150,000l. to help to build our new University buildings after a design by G. Gilbert Scott, which has turned out a very imposing pile of masonry; at least, it is placed on an imposing and magnificent site. I am no prophet, but I should not wonder if old St. Mungo's Cathedral, erected nearly six hundred years ago to the honour and glory of God, will be standing a noble ruin when our new spick-and-span College is a total wreck after all. Such being the difference between the work of really earnest God-fearing men, and that done by contract and Trades' Unions. The Steam Engine, one of the demons of our mad, restless, headlong civilization, is screaming its unearthly whistle in the very quadrangles of the now deserted, but still venerable College buildings in our High Street, almost on the very spot where the philosophic Professors of that day, to their eternal honour, gave a harbourage to James Watt, when the narrow-minded guild-brethren of Glasgow expelled him from their town as a stranger craftsman hailing from Greenock. Such is the irony of events! Excuse the presumption of this rather rambling letter, and apologizing for addressing you at such length,  
  
"I am, very faithfully yours."  
  
I have only time, just now, to remark on this letter, first, that I don't believe any of Mr. Scott's work is badly done, or will come down soon; and that Trades' Unions are quite right when honest and kind: but the frantic mistake of the Glaswegians, in thinking that they can import learning into their town safely in a Gothic case, and have 180,000 pounds' worth of it at command, while they have banished for ever from their eyes the sight of all that mankind have to learn anything about, is,--Well--as the rest of our enlightened public opinion. They might as well put a pyx into a pigsty, to make the pigs pious.  
In the second place, as to my correspondent's wish to read my books, I am entirely pleased by it; but, putting the question of fee aside for the nonce, I am not in the least minded, as matters stand, to prescribe my books for him. Nay, so far as in me lies, he shall neither read them, nor learn to trust in any such poor qualifications and partial comforts of the entirely wrong and dreadful condition of life he is in, with millions of others. If a child in a muddy ditch asked me for a picture-book, I should not give it him; but say, "Come out of that first; or, if you cannot, I must go and get help; but picture-books, there, you shall have none!"  
Only a day and a half in the week on which one can get a walk in the country, (and how few have as much, or anything like it!) just bread enough earned to keep one alive, on those terms--one's daily work asking not so much as a lucifer match's worth of human intelligence;--unwholesome besides--one's chest, shoulders, and stomach getting hourly more useless. Smoke above for sky, mud beneath for water; and the pleasant consciousness of spending one's weary life in the pure service of the devil! And the blacks are emancipated over the water there--and this is what you call "having your own way," here, is it?  
Very solemnly, my good clerk-friend, there is something to be done in this matter; not merely to be read. Do you know any honest men who have a will of their own, among your neighbours? If none, set yourself to seek for such; if any, commune with them on this one subject, how a man may have sight of the Earth he was made of, and his bread out of the dust of it--and peace! And find out what it is that hinders you now from having these, and resolve that you will fight it, and put end to it. If you cannot find out for yourselves, tell me your difficulties, briefly, and I will deal with them for you, as the Second Fors may teach me. Bring you the First with you, and the Third will help us.  
  
And believe me, faithfully yours,  
JOHN RUSKIN.  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
FORS CLAVIGERA.  
LETTER XVII.  
  
Florence, 1st May, 1872.  
My Friends,](61591.docx#chunk9840)

[Have you thought, as I prayed you to think, during the days of April, what things they are that will hinder you from being happy on this first of May? Be assured of it, you are meant, to-day, to be as happy as the birds, at least. If you are not, you, or somebody else, or something that you are one or other responsible for, is wrong; and your first business is to set yourself, them, or it, to rights. Of late you have made that your last business; you have thought things would right themselves, or that it was God's business to right them, not yours. Peremptorily it is yours. Not, observe, to get your rights, but to put things to rights. Some eleven in the dozen of the population of the world are occupied earnestly in putting things to wrongs, thinking to benefit themselves thereby. Is it any wonder, then, you are uncomfortable, when already the world, in our part of it, is over-populated, and eleven in the dozen of the over-population doing diligently wrong; and the remaining dozenth expecting God to do their work for them; and consoling themselves with buying two-shilling publications for eighteenpence?  
To put things to rights! Do you not know how refreshing it is, even to put one's room to rights, when it has got dusty and decomposed? If no other happiness is to be had, the mere war with decomposition is a kind of happiness. But the war with the Lord of Decomposition, the old Dragon himself,--St. George's war, with a princess to save, and win--are none of you, my poor friends, proud enough to hope for any part in that battle? Do you conceive no figure of any princess for May Queen; or is the definite dragon turned into indefinite cuttlefish, vomiting black venom into the waters of your life; or has he multiplied himself into an host of pulicarious dragons--bug-dragons, insatiable as unclean,--whose food you are, daily?  
St. George's war! Here, since last May, when I engraved Giotto's Hope for you, have I been asking whether any one would volunteer for such battle? Not one human creature, except a personal friend or two, for mere love of me, has answered.  
Now, it is true, that my writing may be obscure, or seem only half in earnest. But it is the best I can do: it expresses the thoughts that come to me as they come; and I have no time just now to put them into more intelligible words. And, whether you believe them or not, they are entirely faithful words: I have no interest at all to serve by writing, but yours.  
And, literally, no one answers. Nay, even those who read, read so carelessly that they don't notice whether the book is to go on or not.  
Heaven knows; but it shall, if I am able, and what I undertook last May, be fulfilled, so far as the poor faculty or time left me may serve.  
Read over, now, the end of that letter for May last, from "To talk at a distance," in page 10.  
I have given you the tenth of all I have, as I promised. I cannot, because of those lawyers I was talking of last month, get it given you in a permanent and accumulative form; besides that, among the various blockheadisms and rascalities of the day, the perversion of old endowments from their appointed purposes being now practised with applause, gives one little encouragement to think of the future. However, the seven thousand pounds are given, and wholly now out of my own power; and, as I said, only two or three friends, for love of me, and one for true love of justice also, have, in the course of the year, joined with me.  
However, this is partly my own fault, for not saying more clearly what I want; and for expecting people to be moved by writing, instead of by personal effort. The more I see of writing the less I care for it; one may do more with a man by getting ten words spoken with him face to face, than by the black lettering of a whole life's thought.  
In parenthesis, just read this little bit of Plato; and take it to heart. If the last sentence of it does not fit some people I know of, there is no prophecy on lip of man.  
Socrates is speaking. "I have heard indeed--but no one can say now if it is true or not--that near Nancratis, in Egypt, there was born one of the old gods, the one to whom the bird is sacred which they call the ibis; and this god or demigod's name was Theuth." Second parenthesis--(Theuth, or Thoth: he always has the head of an ibis with a beautiful long bill, in Egyptian sculpture; and you may see him at the British Museum on stone and papyrus infinite,--especially attending at judgments after death, when people's sins are to be weighed in scales; for he is the Egyptian account-keeper, and adds up, and takes note of, things, as you will hear presently from Plato. He became the god of merchants, and a rogue, among the Romans, and is one now among us). "And this demigod found out first, they say, arithmetic, and logic, and geometry, and astronomy, and gambling, and the art of writing.](61591.docx#chunk9841)

["And there was then a king over all Egypt, in the great city which the Greeks called Thebes. And Theuth, going to Thebes, showed the king all the arts he had invented, and said they should be taught to the Egyptians. But the king said:--'What was the good of them?' And Theuth telling him, at length, of each, the king blamed some things, and praised others. But when they came to writing: 'Now, this piece of learning, O king,' says Theuth, 'will make the Egyptians more wise and more remembering; for this is physic for the memory, and for wisdom.' But the king answered:--'O most artful Theuth, it is one sort of person's business to invent arts, and quite another sort of person's business to know what mischief or good is in them. And you, the father of letters, are yet so simple-minded that you fancy their power just the contrary of what it really is; for this art of writing will bring forgetfulness into the souls of those who learn it, because, trusting to the external power of the scripture, and stamp [14] of other men's minds, and not themselves putting themselves in mind, within themselves, it is not medicine of divine memory, but a drug of memorandum, that you have discovered, and you will only give the reputation and semblance of wisdom, not the truth of wisdom, to the learners: for,'" (now do listen to this, you cheap education-mongers), "'for becoming hearers of many things, yet without instruction, they will seem to have manifold opinions, but be in truth without any opinions; and the most of them incapable of living together in any good understanding; having become seeming-wise, instead of wise.'"  
So much for cheap literature; not that I like cheap talk better, mind you; but I wish I could get a word or two with a few honest people, now, face to face. For I have called the fund I have established The St. George's Fund, because I hope to find, here and there, some one who will join in a White Company, like Sir John Hawkwood's, to be called the Company of St. George; which shall have for its end the wise creating and bestowing, instead of the wise stealing, of money. Now it literally happened that before the White Company went into Italy, there was an Italian Company called 'of St. George,' which was afterwards incorporated with Sir John's of the burnished armour; and another company, called 'of the Rose,' which was a very wicked and destructive one. And within my St. George's Company,--which shall be of persons still following their own business, wherever they are, but who will give the tenth of what they have, or make, for the purchase of land in England, to be cultivated by hand, as aforesaid, in my last May number,--shall be another company, not destructive, called of "Monte Rosa," or "Mont Rose," because Monte Rosa is the central mountain of the range between north and south Europe, which keeps the gift of the rain of heaven. And the motto, or watchword of this company is to be the old French "Mont-joie." And they are to be entirely devoted, according to their power, first to the manual labour of cultivating pure land, and guiding of pure streams and rain to the places where they are needed: and secondly, together with this manual labour, and much by its means, they are to carry on the thoughtful labour of true education, in themselves, and of others. And they are not to be monks nor nuns; but are to learn, and teach all fair arts, and sweet order and obedience of life; and to educate the children entrusted to their schools in such practical arts and patient obedience; but not at all, necessarily, in either arithmetic, writing, or reading.  
That is my design, romantic enough, and at this day difficult enough; yet not so romantic, nor so difficult as your now widely and openly proclaimed design, of making the words "obedience" and "loyalty" to cease from the English tongue.  
That same number of the 'Republican' which announced that all property must be taken under control, was graced by a frontispiece, representing, figuratively, "Royalty in extremis;" the joyful end of Rule, and of every strength of Kingship; Britannia, having, perhaps, found her waves of late unruly, declaring there shall be no rule over the land neither. Some day I may let you compare this piece of figurative English art with Giotto's; but, meantime, since, before you look so fondly for the end of Royalty, it is well that you should know somewhat of its beginnings, I have given you a picture of one of the companions in the St. George's Company of all time, out of a pretty book, published at Antwerp, by John Baptist Vrints, cutter of figures in copper, on the 16th April, 1598; and giving briefly the stories, and, in no unworthy imagination, the pictures also, of the first 'foresters' (rulers of woods and waves [15]) in Flanders, where the waves once needed, and received, much ruling; and of the Counts of Flanders who succeeded them, of whom this one, Robert, surnamed "of Jerusalem," was the eleventh, and began to reign in 1077, being "a virtuous, prudent, and brave prince," who, having first taken good order in his money affairs, and ended some unjust claims his predecessors had made on church property; and established a perpetual chancellorship, and legal superintendence over his methods of revenue; took the cross against the infidels, and got the name, in Syria, for his prowess, of the "Son of St. George."  
So he stands, leaning on his long sword--a man desirous of setting the world to rights, if it might be; but not knowing the way of it, nor recognizing that the steel with which it can be done, must take another shape than that double-edged one.](61591.docx#chunk9842)

[And from the eleventh century to this dull nineteenth, less and less the rulers of men have known their weapon. So far, yet, are we from beating sword into ploughshare, that now the sword is set to undo the plough's work when it has been done; and at this hour the ghastliest ruin of all that moulder from the fire, pierced through black rents by the unnatural sunlight above the ashamed streets of Paris, is the long, skeleton, and roofless hollow of the "Grenier d'Abondance."  
Such Agriculture have we contrived here, in Europe, and ploughing of new furrows for graves. Will you hear how Agriculture is now contrived in America?--where, since you spend your time here in burning corn, you must send to buy it; trusting, however, still to your serviceable friend the Fire, as here to consume, so there, to sow and reap, for repairing of consumption. I have just received a letter from California, which I trust the writer will not blame me for printing:--  
  
"March 1st, 1872.  
"Sir,  
"You have so strongly urged 'agriculture by the hand' that it may be of some interest to you to know the result thus far of agriculture by machinery, in California. I am the more willing to address you on this subject from the fact that I may have to do with a new Colony in this State, which will, I trust, adopt, as far as practicable, your ideas as to agriculture by the hand. Such thoughts as you might choose to give regarding the conduct of such a Colony here would be particularly acceptable; and should you deem it expedient to comply with this earnest and sincere request, the following facts may be of service to you in forming just conclusions.  
"We have a genial climate and a productive soil. Our farms ('ranches') frequently embrace many thousands of acres, while the rule is, scarcely ever less than hundreds of acres. Wheat-fields of 5,000 acres are by no means uncommon, and not a few of above 40,000 acres are known. To cultivate these extensive tracts much machinery is used, such as steam-ploughs, gang-ploughs, reaping, mowing, sowing, and thrashing machines; and seemingly to the utter extermination of the spirit of home, and rural life. Gangs of labourers are hired during the emergency of harvesting; and they are left for the most part unhoused, and are also fed more like animals than men. Harvesting over, they are discharged, and thus are left near the beginning of our long and rainy winters to shift for themselves. Consequently the larger towns and cities are invested for months with idle men and boys. Housebreaking and highway robbery are of almost daily occurrence. As to the farmers themselves, they live in a dreamy, comfortless way, and are mostly without education or refinement. To show them how to live better and cleaner; to give them nobler aims than merely to raise wheat for the English market; to teach them the history of those five cities, and 'their girls to cook exquisitely,' etc., is surely a mission for earnest men in this country, no less than in England, to say nothing of the various accomplishments to which you have alluded. I have caused to be published in some of our farming districts many of the more important of your thoughts bearing on these subjects, and I trust with beneficial results.  
"I trust I shall not intrude on Mr. Ruskin's patience if I now say something by way of thankfulness for what I have received from your works. [16] I know not certainly if this will ever reach you. If it does, it may in some small way gladden you to know that I owe to your teaching almost all the good I have thus attained. A large portion of my life has been spent at sea, and in roaming in Mexico, Central and South America, and in the Malaysian and Polynesian Islands. I have been a sailor before and abaft the mast. Years ago I found on a remote island of the Pacific the 'Modern Painters'; after them the 'Seven Lamps of Architecture'; and finally your complete works. Ignorant and uncultivated, I began earnestly to follow certain of your teachings. I read most of the books you recommended, simply because you seemed to be my teacher; and so in the course of these years I have come to believe in you about as faithfully as one man ever believes in another. From having no fixed object in life I have finally found that I have something to do, and will ultimately, I trust, have something to say about sea-life, something that has not, I think, hitherto been said--if God ever permits me the necessary leisure from hard railway work, the most hopeless and depressing of all work I have hitherto done.  
  
"Your most thankful servant, ----"  
  
With the account given in the first part of this letter of the results of mechanical agriculture in California, you shall now compare a little sketch by Marmontel of the peasant life, not mechanical, in his own province. It is given, altering only the name of the river, in the "Contes Moraux," in the story, professing to continue that of Moliere's 'Misanthrope':](61591.docx#chunk9843)

["Alceste, discontented as you know, both with his mistress and with his judges, decided upon flying from men, and retired very far from Paris to the banks of the Vologne; this river, in which the shells enclose pearl, is yet more precious by the fertility which it causes to spring on its borders; the valley that it waters is one beautiful meadow. On one side of it rise smiling hills, scattered all over with woods and villages, on the other extends a vast level of fields covered with corn. It was there that Alceste went to live, forgotten by all, free from cares, and from irksome duties; entirely his own, and finally delivered from the odious spectacle of the world, he breathed freely, and praised heaven for having broken all his chains. A little study, much exercise, pleasures not vivid, but untroubled; in a word, a life peacefully active, preserved him from the ennui of solitude: he desired nothing, and regretted nothing. One of the pleasures of his retreat was to see the cultivated and fertile ground all about him nourishing a peasantry, which appeared to him happy. For a misanthrope who has become so by his virtue, only thinks that he hates men, because he loves them. Alceste felt a strange softening of the heart mingled with joy at the sight of his fellow-creatures rich by the labour of their hand. 'Those people,' said he, 'are very happy to be still half savage. They would soon be corrupted if they were more civilized.' As he was walking in the country, he chanced upon a labourer who was ploughing, and singing as he ploughed. 'God have a care of you, my good man!' said he; 'you are very gay?' 'I mostly am,' replied the peasant. 'I am happy to hear it: that proves that you are content with your condition.' 'Until now, I have good cause to be.' 'Are you married?' 'Yes, thank heaven.' 'Have you any children?' 'I had five. I have lost one, but that is a mischief that may be mended.' 'Is your wife young?' 'She is twenty-five years old.' 'Is she pretty?' 'She is, for me, but she is better than pretty, she is good.' 'And you love her?' 'If I love her! Who would not love her! I wonder?' 'And she loves you also, without doubt.' 'Oh! for that matter, with all her heart-- just the same as before marriage.' 'Then you loved each other before marriage?' 'Without that, should we have let ourselves be caught?' 'And your children--are they healthy?' 'Ah! it's a pleasure to see them! The eldest is only five years old, and he's already a great deal cleverer than his father, and for my two girls, never was anything so charming! It'll be ill-luck indeed if they don't get husbands. The youngest is sucking yet, but the little fellow will be stout and strong. Would you believe it?--he beats his sisters when they want to kiss their mother!--he's always afraid of anybody's taking him from the breast.' 'All that is, then, very happy?' 'Happy! I should think so--you should see the joy there is when I come back from my work! You would say they hadn't seen me for a year. I don't know which to attend to first. My wife is round my neck--my girls in my arms--my boy gets hold of my legs--little Jeannot is like to roll himself off the bed to get to me--and I, I laugh, and cry, and kiss all at once--for all that makes me cry!' 'I believe it, indeed,' said Alceste. 'You know it, sir, I suppose, for you are doubtless a father?' 'I have not that happiness.' 'So much the worse for you! There's nothing in the world worth having, but that.' 'And how do you live?' 'Very well: we have excellent bread, good milk, and the fruit of our orchard. My wife, with a little bacon, makes a cabbage soup that the King would be glad to eat! Then we have eggs from the poultry-yard; and on Sunday we have a feast, and drink a little cup of wine' 'Yes, but when the year is bad?' 'Well, one expects the year to be bad, sometimes, and one lives on what one has saved from the good years.' 'Then there's the rigour of the weather--the cold and the rain, and the heat--that you have to bear.' 'Well! one gets used to it; and if you only knew the pleasure that one has in the evening, in getting the cool breeze after a day of summer; or, in winter, warming one's hands at the blaze of a good faggot, between one's wife and children; and then one sups with good appetite, and one goes to bed; and think you, that one remembers the bad weather? Sometimes my wife says to me,--"My good man, do you hear the wind and the storm? Ah, suppose you were in the fields?" "But I'm not in the fields, I'm here," I say to her. Ah, sir! there are many people in the fine world, who don't live as content as we.' 'Well! but the taxes?' 'We pay them merrily--and well we should--all the country can't be noble, our squires and judges can't come to work in the fields with us--they do for us what we can't--we do for them what they can't--and every business, as one says, has its pains.' 'What equity!' said the misanthrope; 'there, in two words, is all the economy of primitive society. Ah, Nature! there is nothing just but thee! and the healthiest reason is in thy untaught simplicity. But, in paying the taxes so willingly, don't you run some risk of getting more put on you?' 'We used to be afraid of that; but, thank God, the lord of the place has relieved us from this anxiety. He plays the part of our good king to us. He imposes and receives himself, and, in case of need, makes advances for us. He is as careful of us as if we were his own children.' 'And who is this gallant man?' 'The Viscount Laval--he is known enough, all the country respects him.' 'Does he live in his chateau?' 'He passes eight months of the year there.' 'And the rest?' 'At Paris, I believe.' 'Does he see any company?' 'The townspeople of Bruyeres, and now and then, some of our old men go to taste his soup and chat with him.' 'And from Paris does he bring nobody?' 'Nobody but his daughter.' 'He is much in the right. And how does he employ himself?' 'In judging between us--in making up our quarrels--in marrying our children--in maintaining peace in our families--in helping them when the times are bad.' 'You must take me to see his village,' said Alceste, 'that must be interesting.'](61591.docx#chunk9844)

["He was surprised to find the roads, even the cross-roads, bordered with hedges, and kept with care; but, coming on a party of men occupied in mending them, 'Ah!' he said, 'so you've got forced labour here?' 'Forced?' answered an old man who presided over the work. 'We know nothing of that here, sir; all these men are paid, we constrain nobody; only, if there comes to the village a vagrant, or a do-nothing, they send him to me, and if he wants bread he can gain it; or, he must go to seek it elsewhere.' 'And who has established this happy police?' 'Our good lord--our father--the father to all of us.' 'And where do the funds come from?' 'From the commonalty; and, as it imposes the tax on itself, it does not happen here, as too often elsewhere, that the rich are exempted at the expense of the poor.'  
"The esteem of Alceste increased every moment for the wise and benevolent master who governed all this little country. 'How powerful would a king be!' he said to himself--'and how happy a state! if all the great proprietors followed the example of this one; but Paris absorbs both property and men, it robs all, and swallows up everything.'  
"The first glance at the village showed him the image of confidence and comfort. He entered a building which had the appearance of a public edifice, and found there a crowd of children, women, and old men occupied in useful labour;--idleness was only permitted to the extremely feeble. Childhood, almost at its first steps out of the cradle, caught the habit and the taste for work; and old age, at the borders of the tomb, still exercised its trembling hands; the season in which the earth rests brought every vigorous arm to the workshops--and then the lathe, the saw, and the hatchet gave new value to products of nature.  
"'I am not surprised,' said Alceste, 'that this people is pure from vice, and relieved from discontent. It is laborious, and occupied without ceasing.' He asked how the workshop had been established. 'Our good lord,' was the reply, 'advanced the first funds for it. It was a very little place at first, and all that was done was at his expense, at his risk, and to his profit; but, once convinced that there was solid advantage to be gained, he yielded the enterprise to us, and now interferes only to protect; and every year he gives to the village the instruments of some one of our arts. It is the present that he makes at the first wedding which is celebrated in the year.'"  
  
Thus wrote, and taught, a Frenchman of the old school, before the Revolution. But worldly-wise Paris went on her own way absorbing property and men; and has attained, this first of May, what means and manner of festival you see in her Grenier d'Abondance.  
  
  
Glance back now to my proposal for the keeping of the first of May, in the letter on "Rose Gardens" in 'Time and Tide,' and discern which state is best for you--modern "civilization," or Marmontel's rusticity, and mine.  
  
Ever faithfully yours,  
JOHN RUSKIN.  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
FORS CLAVIGERA.  
LETTER XVIII.  
  
Pisa, 29th April, 1872.  
My Friends,  
  
You would pity me, if you knew how seldom I see a newspaper, just now; but I chanced on one yesterday, and found that all the world was astir about the marriage of the Marquis of B.; and that the Pope had sent him, on that occasion, a telegraphic blessing of super-fine quality.  
I wonder what the Marquis of B. has done to deserve to be blessed to that special extent, and whether a little mild beatitude, sent here to Pisa, might not have been better spent? For, indeed, before getting hold of the papers, I had been greatly troubled, while drawing the east end of the Duomo, by three fellows who were leaning against the Leaning Tower, and expectorating loudly and copiously, at intervals of half a minute each, over the white marble base of it, which they evidently conceived to have been constructed only to be spit upon. They were all in rags, and obviously proposed to remain in rags all their days, and pass what leisure of life they could obtain, in spitting. There was a boy with them, in rags also, and not less expectorant; but having some remains of human activity in him still, being not more than twelve years old; and he was even a little interested in my brushes and colours, but rewarded himself, after the effort of some attention to these, by revolving slowly round the iron railing in front of me like a pensive squirrel. This operation at last disturbed me so much, that I asked him if there were no other railings in Pisa he could turn upside down over, but these? "Sono cascato, Signor--" "I tumbled over them, please, Sir," said he, apologetically, with infinite satisfaction in his black eyes.  
Now it seemed to me that these three moist-throated men and the squirrelline boy stood much more in need of a paternal blessing than the Marquis of B.--a blessing, of course, with as much of the bloom off it as would make it consistent with the position in which Providence had placed them; but enough, in its moderate way, to bring the good out of them instead of the evil. For there was all manner of good in them, deep and pure--yet for ever to be dormant; and all manner of evil, shallow and superficial, yet for ever to be active and practical, as matters stood that day, under the Leaning Tower.](61591.docx#chunk9845)

[Lucca, 7th May.--Eight days gone, and I've been working hard, and looking my carefullest; and seem to have done nothing, nor begun to see these places, though I've known them thirty years, and though Mr. Murray's Guide says one may see Lucca, and its Ducal Palace and Piazza, the Cathedral, the Baptistery, nine churches, and the Roman amphitheatre, and take a drive round the ramparts, in the time between the stopping of one train and the starting of the next.  
I wonder how much time Mr. Murray would allow for the view I had to-day, from the tower of the Cathedral, up the valley called of "Nievole,"--now one tufted softness of fresh springing leaves, far as the eye can reach. You know something of the produce of the hills that bound it, and perhaps of its own: at least, one used to see "Fine Lucca Oil" often enough in the grocers' windows (petroleum has, I suppose, now taken its place), and the staple of Spitalfields was, I believe, first woven with Lucca thread.  
The actual manner of production of these good things is thus:--The Val di Nievole is some five miles wide by thirty long, and is simply one field of corn or rich grass land, undivided by hedges; the corn two feet high, and more, to-day. Quite Lord Derby's style of agriculture, you think? No; not quite. Undivided by hedges, the fields are yet meshed across and across by an intricate network of posts and chains. The posts are maple-trees, and the chains, garlands of vine. The meshes of this net each enclose two or three acres of the corn-land, with a row of mulberry-trees up the middle of it, for silk. There are poppies, and bright ones too, about the banks and roadsides; but the corn of Val di Nievole is too proud to grow with poppies, and is set with wild gladiolus instead, deep violet. Here and there a mound of crag rises out of the fields, crested with stone-pine, and studded all over with the large stars of the white rock-cistus. Quiet streams, filled with close crowds of the golden waterflag, wind beside meadows painted with purple orchis. On each side of the great plain is a wilderness of hills, veiled at their feet with a grey cloud of olive woods; above, sweet with glades of chestnut; peaks of more distant blue, still, to-day, embroidered with snow, are rather to be thought of as vast precious stones than mountains, for all the state of the world's palaces has been hewn out of their marble.  
I was looking over all this from under the rim of a large bell, beautifully embossed, with a St. Sebastian upon it, and some lovely thin-edged laurel leaves, and an inscription saying that the people should be filled with the fat of the land, if they listened to the voice of the Lord. The bell-founder of course meant, by the voice of the Lord, the sound of his own bell; and all over the plain, one could see towers rising above the vines voiced in the same manner. Also much trumpeting and fiddling goes on below, to help the bells, on holy days; and, assuredly, here is fat enough of land to be filled with, if listening to these scrapings and tinklings were indeed the way to be filled.  
The laurel leaves on the bell were so finely hammered that I felt bound to have a ladder set against the lip of it, that I might examine them more closely; and the sacristan and bell-ringer were so interested in this proceeding that they got up, themselves, on the cross-beams, and sat like two jackdaws, looking on, one on each side; for which expression of sympathy I was deeply grateful, and offered the bell-ringer, on the spot, two bank-notes for tenpence each. But they were so rotten with age, and so brittle and black with tobacco, that, having unadvisedly folded them up small in my purse, the patches on their backs had run their corners through them, and they came out tattered like so much tinder. The bell-ringer looked at them hopelessly, and gave me them back. I promised him some better patched ones, and folded the remnants of tinder up carefully, to be kept at Coniston, (where we have still a tenpence-worth or so of copper,--though no olive oil)--for specimens of the currency of the new Kingdom of Italy.  
Such are the monuments of financial art, attained by a nation which has lived in the fattest of lands for at least three thousand years, and for the last twelve hundred of them has had at least some measure of Christian benediction, with help from bell, book, candle and, recently, even from gas.](61591.docx#chunk9846)

[Yet you must not despise the benediction, though it has not provided them with clean bank-notes. The peasant race, at least, of the Val di Nievole are not unblest; if honesty, kindness, food sufficient for them, and peace of heart, can anywise make up for poverty in current coin. Only the evening before last, I was up among the hills to the south of Lucca, close to the remains of the country-house of Castruccio Castracani, who was Lord of the Val di Nievole, and much good land besides, in the year 1328; (and whose sword, you perhaps remember, was presented to the King of Sardinia, now King of Italy, when first he visited the Lucchese after driving out the old Duke of Tuscany; and Mrs. Browning wrote a poem upon the presentation;) a Neapolitan Duchess has got his country-house now, and has restored it to her taste. Well, I was up among the hills, that way, in places where no English, nor Neapolitans either, ever dream of going, being altogether lovely and at rest, and the country life in them unchanged; and I had several friends with me, and among them one of the young girls who were at Furness Abbey last year; and, scrambling about among the vines, she lost a pretty little cross of Florentine work. Luckily, she had made acquaintance, only the day before, with the peasant mistress of a cottage close by, and with her two youngest children, Adam and Eve. Eve was still tied up tight in swaddling clothes, down to the toes, and carried about as a bundle; but Adam was old enough to run about; and found the cross, and his mother gave it us back next day.  
Not unblest, such a people, though with some common human care and kindness you might bless them a little more. If only you would not curse them; but the curse of your modern life is fatally near, and only for a few years more, perhaps, they will be seen--driving their tawny kine, or with their sheep following them,--to pass, like pictures in enchanted motion, among their glades of vine.  
  
  
Rome, 12th May.--I am writing at the window of a new inn, whence I have a view of a large green gas-lamp, and of a pond, in rustic rock-work, with four large black ducks in it; also of the top of the Pantheon; sundry ruined walls; tiled roofs innumerable; and a palace about a quarter of a mile long, and the height, as near as I can guess, of Folkestone cliffs under the New Parade; all which I see to advantage over a balustrade veneered with an inch of marble over four inches of cheap stone, carried by balusters of cast iron, painted and sanded, but with the rust coming through,--this being the proper modern recipe in Italy for balustrades which may meet the increasing demand of travellers for splendour of abode. (By the way, I see I can get a pretty little long vignette view of the roof of the Pantheon, and some neighbouring churches, through a chink between the veneering and the freestone.)  
Standing in this balcony, I am within three hundred yards of the greater Church of St. Mary, from which Castruccio Castracani walked to St. Peter's on 17th January, 1328, carrying the sword of the German Empire, with which he was appointed to gird its Emperor, on his taking possession of Rome, by Castruccio's help, in spite of the Pope. The Lord of the Val di Nievole wore a dress of superb damask silk, doubtless the best that the worms of Lucca mulberry-trees could spin; and across his breast an embroidered scroll, inscribed, "He is what God made him," and across his shoulders, behind, another scroll, inscribed, "And he shall be what God will make."  
On the 3rd of August, that same year, he recovered Pistoja from the Florentines, and rode home to his own Lucca in triumph, being then the greatest war-captain in Europe, and Lord of Pisa, Pistoja, Lucca, half the coast of Genoa, and three hundred fortified castles in the Apennines; on the third of September he lay dead in Lucca, of fever. "Crushed before the moth;" as the silkworms also, who were boiled before even they became so much as moths, to make his embroidered coat for him. And, humanly speaking, because he had worked too hard in the trenches of Pistoja, in the dog-days, with his armour on, and with his own hands on the mattock, like the good knight he was.  
Nevertheless, his sword was no gift for the King of Italy, if the Lucchese had thought better of it. For those three hundred castles of his were all Robber-castles, and he, in fact, only the chief captain of the three hundred thieves who lived in them. In the beginning of his career, these "towers of the Lunigiana belonged to gentlemen who had made brigandage in the mountains, or piracy on the sea, the sole occupation of their youth. Castruccio united them round him, and called to his little court all the exiles and adventurers who were wandering from town to town, in search of war or pleasures." [17]  
And, indeed, to Professors of Art, the Apennine between Lucca and Pistoja is singularly delightful to this day, because of the ruins of these robber-castles on every mound, and of the pretty monasteries and arcades of cloister beside them. But how little we usually estimate the real relation of these picturesque objects! The homes of Baron and Clerk, side by side, established on the hills. Underneath, in the plain, the peasant driving his oxen. The Baron lives by robbing the peasant, and the Clerk by blessing the Baron.](61591.docx#chunk9847)

[Blessing and absolving, though the Barons of grandest type could live, and resolutely die, without absolution. Old Straw-Mattress of Evilstone, [18] at ninety-six, sent his son from beside his death-mattress to attack the castle of the Bishop of Arezzo, thinking the Bishop would be off his guard, news having gone abroad that the grey-haired Knight of Evilstone could sit his horse no more. But, usually, the absolution was felt to be needful towards the end of life; and if one thinks of it, the two kinds of edifices on the hill-tops may be shortly described as those of the Pillager and Pardoner, or Pardonere, Chaucer's word being classical in spelling, and the best general one for the clergy of the two great Evangelical and Papal sects. Only a year or two ago, close to the Crystal Palace, I heard the Rev. Mr. Tipple announce from his pulpit that there was no thief, nor devourer of widows' houses, nor any manner of sinner, in his congregation that day, who might not leave the church an entirely pardoned and entirely respectable person, if he would only believe what the Rev. Mr. Tipple was about to announce to him.  
Strange, too, how these two great pardoning religions agree in the accompaniment of physical filth. I have never been hindered from drawing street subjects by pure human stench, but in two cities,--Edinburgh and Rome.  
There are some things, however, which Edinburgh and London pardon, now-a-days, which Rome would not. Penitent thieves, by all means, but not impenitent; still less impenitent peculators.  
Have patience a little, for I must tell you one or two things more about Lucca: they are all connected with the history of Florence, which is to be one of the five cities you are to be able to give account of; and, by the way, remember at once, that her florin in the 14th century was of such pure gold that when in Chaucer's "Pardonere's Tale" Death puts himself into the daintiest dress he can, it is into a heap of "floreines faire and bright." He has chosen another form at Lucca; and when I had folded up my two bits of refuse tinder, I walked into the Cathedral to look at the golden lamp which hangs before the Sacred Face--twenty-four pounds of pure gold in the lamp: Face of wood: the oath of kings, since William Rufus' days; carved eighteen hundred years ago, if one would believe, and very full of pardon to faithful Lucchese; yet, to some, helpless.  
There are, I suppose, no educated persons in Italy, and few in England, who do not profess to admire Dante; and, perhaps, out of every hundred of these admirers, three or four may have read the bit about Francesca di Rimini, the death of Ugolino, and the description of the Venetian Arsenal. But even of these honestly studious three or four we should rarely find one, who knew why the Venetian Arsenal was described. You shall hear, if you will.  
"As, in the Venetian Arsenal, the pitch boils in the winter time, wherewith to caulk their rotten ships ... so, not by fire, but divine art, a thick pitch boiled there, beneath, which had plastered itself all up over the banks on either side. But in it I could see nothing, except the bubbles that its boiling raised, which from time to time made it all swell up over its whole surface, and presently fell back again depressed. And as I looked at it fixedly, and wondered, my guide drew me back hastily, saying, 'Look, look!' And when I turned, I saw behind us, a black devil come running along the rocks. Ah, how wild his face! ah, how bitter his action as he came with his wings wide, light upon his feet! On his shoulder he bore a sinner, grasped by both haunches; and when he came to the bridge foot, he cried down into the pit: 'Here's an ancient from Lucca; put him under, that I may fetch more, for the land is full of such; there, for money, they make "No" into "Yes" quickly.' And he cast him in and turned back,--never mastiff fiercer after his prey. The thrown sinner plunged in the pitch, and curled himself up; but the devils from under the bridge cried out, 'There's no holy face here; here one swims otherwise than in the Serchio.' And they caught him with their hooks and pulled him under, as cooks do the meat in broth; crying, 'People play here hidden; so that they may filch in secret, if they can.'"](61591.docx#chunk9848)

[Doubtless, you consider all this extremely absurd, and are of opinion that such things are not likely to happen in the next world. Perhaps not; nor is it clear that Dante believed they would; but I should be glad if you would tell me what you think is likely to happen there. In the meantime, please to observe Dante's figurative meaning, which is by no means absurd. Every one of his scenes has symbolic purpose, down to the least detail. This lake of pitch is money, which, in our own vulgar English phrase, "sticks to people's fingers;" it clogs and plasters its margin all over, because the mind of a man bent on dishonest gain makes everything within its reach dirty; it bubbles up and down, because underhand gains nearly always involve alternate excitement and depression; and it is haunted by the most cruel and indecent of all the devils, because there is nothing so mean, and nothing so cruel, but a peculator will do it. So you may read every line figuratively, if you choose: all that I want is, that you should be acquainted with the opinions of Dante concerning peculation. For with the history of the five cities, I wish you to know also the opinions, on all subjects personally interesting to you, of five people who lived in them; namely, of Plato, Virgil, Dante, Victor Carpaccio (whose opinions I must gather for you from his paintings, for painting is the way Venetians write), and Shakespeare.  
If, after knowing these five men's opinions on practical matters (these five, as you will find, being all of the same mind), you prefer to hold Mr. J. S. Mill's and Mr. Fawcett's opinions, you are welcome. And indeed I may as well end this by at once examining some of Mr. Fawcett's statements on the subject of Interest, that being one of our chief modern modes of peculation; but, before we put aside Dante for to-day, just note farther this, that while he has sharp punishment for thieves, forgers, and peculators,--the thieves being changed into serpents, the forgers covered with leprosy, and the peculators boiled in pitch,--he has no punishment for bad workmen; no Tuscan mind at that day being able to conceive such a ghastly sin as a man's doing bad work wilfully; and, indeed, I think the Tuscan mind, and in some degree the Piedmontese, retain some vestige of this old temper; for though, not a fortnight since (on 3rd May), the cross of marble in the arch-spandril next the east end of the Chapel of the Thorn at Pisa was dashed to pieces before my eyes, as I was drawing it for my class in heraldry at Oxford, by a stone-mason, that his master might be paid for making a new one, I have no doubt the new one will be as honestly like the old as master and man can make it; and Mr. Murray's Guide will call it a judicious restoration. So also, though here, the new Government is digging through the earliest rampart of Rome (agger of Servius Tullius), to build a new Finance Office, which will doubtless issue tenpenny notes in Latin, with the dignity of denarii (the "pence" of your New Testament), I have every reason to suppose the new Finance Office will be substantially built, and creditable to its masons; (the veneering and cast-iron work being, I believe, done mostly at the instigation of British building companies). But it seems strange to me that, coming to Rome for quite other reasons, I should be permitted by the Third Fors to see the agger of Tullius cut through, for the site of a Finance Office, and his Mons Justitiae (Mount of Justice), presumably the most venerable piece of earth in Italy, carted away, to make room for a railroad-station of Piccola Velocita. For Servius Tullius was the first king who stamped money with the figures of animals, and introduced a word among the Romans with the sound of which Englishmen are also now acquainted, "pecunia." Moreover, it is in speaking of this very agger of Tullius that Livy explains in what reverence the Romans held the space between the outer and inner walls of their cities, which modern Italy delights to turn into a Boulevard.  
Now then, for Mr. Fawcett:--  
At the 146th page of the edition of his 'Manual' previously quoted, you will find it stated that the interest of money consists of three distinct parts:  
  
1. Reward for abstinence. 2. Compensation for the risk of loss. 3. Wages for the labour of superintendence.  
  
I will reverse this order in examining the statements; for the only real question is as to the first, and we had better at once clear the other two away from it.  
3. Wages for the labour of superintendence.](61591.docx#chunk9849)

[By giving the capitalist wages at all, we put him at once into the class of labourers, which in my November letter I showed you is partly right; but, by Mr. Fawcett's definition, and in the broad results of business, he is not a labourer. So far as he is one, of course, like any other, he is to be paid for his work. There is no question but that the partner who superintends any business should be paid for superintendence; but the question before us is only respecting payment for doing nothing. I have, for instance, at this moment 15,000l. of Bank Stock, and receive 1,200l. odd, a year, from the Bank, but I have never received the slightest intimation from the directors that they wished for my assistance in the superintendence of that establishment;--(more shame for them.) But even in cases where the partners are active, it does not follow that the one who has most money in the business is either fittest to superintend it, or likely to do so; it is indeed probable that a man who has made money already will know how to make more; and it is necessary to attach some importance to property as the sign of sense: but your business is to choose and pay your superintendent for his sense, and not for his money. Which is exactly what Mr. Carlyle has been telling you for some time; and both he and all his disciples entirely approve of interest, if you are indeed prepared to define that term as payment for the exercise of common sense spent in the service of the person who pays for it. I reserve yet awhile, however, what is to be said, as hinted in my first letter, about the sale of ideas.  
2. Compensation for risk.  
Does Mr. Fawcett mean by compensation for risk, protection from it, or reward for running it? Every business involves a certain quantity of risk, which is properly covered by every prudent merchant, but he does not expect to make a profit out of his risks, nor calculate on a percentage on his insurance. If he prefer not to insure, does Professor Fawcett mean that his customers ought to compensate him for his anxiety; and that while the definition of the first part of interest is extra payment for prudence, the definition of the second part of interest is extra payment for imprudence? Or, does Professor Fawcett mean, what is indeed often the fact, that interest for money represents such reward for risk as people may get across the green cloth at Homburg or Monaco? Because so far as what used to be business is, in modern political economy, gambling, Professor Fawcett will please to observe that what one gamester gains another loses. You cannot get anything out of Nature, or from God, by gambling;--only out of your neighbour: and to the quantity of interest of money thus gained, you are mathematically to oppose a precisely equal disinterest of somebody else's money.  
These second and third reasons for interest then, assigned by Professor Fawcett, have evidently nothing whatever to do with the question. What I want to know is, why the Bank of England is paying me 1,200l. a year. It certainly does not pay me for superintendence. And so far from receiving my dividend as compensation for risk, I put my money into the bank because I thought it exactly the safest place to put it in. But nobody can be more anxious than I to find it proper that I should have 1,200l. a year. Finding two of Mr. Fawcett's reasons fail me utterly, I cling with tenacity to the third, and hope the best from it.  
The third, or first,--and now too sorrowfully the last--of the Professor's reasons, is this, that my 1,200l. are given me as "the reward of abstinence." It strikes me, upon this, that if I had not my 15,000l. of Bank Stock I should be a good deal more abstinent than I am, and that nobody would then talk of rewarding me for it. It might be possible to find even cases of very prolonged and painful abstinence, for which no reward has yet been adjudged by less abstinent England. Abstinence may, indeed, have its reward, nevertheless; but not by increase of what we abstain from, unless there be a law of growth for it, unconnected with our abstinence. "You cannot have your cake and eat it." Of course not; and if you don't eat it, you have your cake; but not a cake and a half! Imagine the complex trial of schoolboy minds, if the law of nature about cakes were, that if you ate none of your cake to-day, you would have ever so much bigger a cake to-morrow!--which is Mr. Fawcett's notion of the law of nature about money; and, alas, many a man's beside,--it being no law of nature whatever, but absolutely contrary to all her laws, and not to be enacted by the whole force of united mankind.  
Not a cake and a quarter to-morrow, dunce, however abstinent you are--only the cake you have,--if the mice don't get at it in the night.  
Interest, then, is not, it appears, payment for labour; it is not reward for risk; it is not reward for abstinence.  
What is it?  
One of two things it is;--taxation, or usury. Of which in my next letter. Meantime believe me  
  
Faithfully yours,  
J. RUSKIN.  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
FORS CLAVIGERA.  
LETTER XIX.  
  
Verona, 18th June, 1872.  
My Friends,  
  
What an age of progress it is, by help of advertisements! No wonder you put some faith in them, friends. In summer one's work is necessarily much before breakfast; so, coming home tired to-day, I order a steak, with which is served to me a bottle of "Moutarde Diaphane," from Bordeaux.](61591.docx#chunk9850)

[What a beautiful arrangement have we here! Fancy the appropriate mixture of manufactures of cold and hot at Bordeaux--claret and diaphanous mustard! Then the quantity of printing and proclamation necessary to make people in Verona understand that diaphanous mustard is desirable, and may be had at Bordeaux. Fancy, then, the packing, and peeping into the packages, and porterages, and percentages on porterages; and the engineering, and the tunnelling, and the bridge-building, and the steam whistling, and the grinding of iron, and raising of dust in the Limousin (Marmontel's country), and in Burgundy, and in Savoy, and under the Mont Cenis, and in Piedmont, and in Lombardy, and at last over the field of Solferino, to fetch me my bottle of diaphanous mustard!  
And to think that, besides paying the railway officers all along the line, and the custom-house officers at the frontier, and the original expenses of advertisement, and the profits of its proprietors, my diaphanous mustard paid a dividend to somebody or other, all the way here! I wonder it is not more diaphanous by this time!  
An age of progress, indeed, in which the founding of my poor St. George's Company, growing its own mustard, and desiring no dividends, may well seem difficult. I have scarcely had courage yet to insist on that second particular, but will try to find it, on this Waterloo day.  
Observe, then, once for all, it is to be a company for Alms-giving, not for dividend-getting. For I still believe in Alms-giving, though most people now-a-days do not, but think the only hopeful way of serving their neighbour is to make a profit out of him. I am of opinion, on the contrary, that the hopefullest way of serving him is to let him make a profit out of me, and I only ask the help of people who are at one with me in that mind.  
Alms-giving, therefore, is to be our function; yet alms only of a certain sort. For there are bedesmen and bedesmen, and our charities must be as discriminate as possible.  
For instance, those two steely and stalwart horsemen, who sit, by the hour, under the two arches opposite Whitehall, from ten to four per diem, to receive the public alms. It is their singular and well-bred manner of begging, indeed, to keep their helmets on their heads, and sit erect on horseback; but one may, with slight effort of imagination, conceive the two helmets held in a reversed manner, each in the mouth of a well-bred and politely-behaving dog, Irish greyhound, or the like; sitting erect, it also, paws in air, with the brass instead of copper pan in its mouth, plume downwards, for reception of pence.  
"Ready to fight for us, they are, on occasional 18ths of June."  
Doubtless, and able-bodied;--barons of truest make: but I thought your idea of discriminate charity was to give rather to the sick than the able-bodied? and that you have no hope of interfering henceforward, except by money payments, in any foreign affairs?  
"But the Guards are necessary to keep order in the Park."  
Yes, certainly, and farther than the Park. The two breastplated figures, glittering in transfixed attitudes on each side of the authoritative clock, are, indeed, very precious time-piece ornamentation. No watchmaker's window in Paris or Geneva can show the like. Finished little figures, perfect down to the toes of their boots,--the enamelled clasp on the girdle of the British Constitution!--You think the security of that depends on the freedom of your press, and the purity of your elections?  
Do but unclasp this piece of dainty jewellery; send the metal of it to the melting-pot, and see where your British Constitution will be, in a few turns of the hands of the faultless clock. They are precious statues, these, good friends; set there to keep you and me from having too much of our own way; and I joyfully and gratefully drop my penny into each helmet as I pass by, though I expect no other dividend from that investment than good order, picturesque effect, and an occasional flourish on the kettle-drum.  
Likewise, from their contributed pence, the St. George's Company must be good enough to expect dividend only in good order and picturesque effect of another sort. For my notion of discriminate charity is by no means, like most other people's, the giving to unable-bodied paupers. My alms-people are to be the ablest bodied I can find; the ablest minded I can make; and from ten to four every day will be on duty. Ten to four, nine to three, or perhaps six to twelve;--just the time those two gilded figures sit with their tools idle on their shoulders, (being fortunately without employment,) my ungilded, but not unstately, alms-men shall stand with tools at work, mattock or flail, axe or hammer. And I do not doubt but in little time, they will be able to thresh or hew rations for their day out of the ground, and that our help to them need only be in giving them that to hew them out of. Which, you observe, is just what I ask may be bought for them.  
"'May be bought,' but by whom? and for whom, how distributed, in whom vested?" and much more you have to ask.  
As soon as I am sure you understand what needs to be done, I will satisfy you as to the way of doing it.  
But I will not let you know my plans, till you acknowledge my principles, which I have no expectation of your doing yet awhile.  
  
  
June 22nd.  
"Bought for them"--for whom? How should I know? The best people I can find, or make, as chance may send them: the Third Fors must look to it. Surely it cannot matter much, to you, whom the thing helps, so long as you are quite sure, and quite content, that it won't help you?](61591.docx#chunk9851)

[That last sentence is wonderfully awkward English, not to say ungrammatical; but I must write such English as may come to-day, for there's something wrong with the Post, or the railroads, and I have no revise of what I wrote for you at Florence, a fortnight since; so that must be left for the August Letter, and meanwhile I must write something quickly in its place, or be too late for the first of July. Of the many things I have to say to you, it matters little which comes first; indeed, I rather like the Third Fors to take the order of them into her hands, out of mine.  
I repeat my question. It surely cannot matter to you whom the thing helps, so long as you are content that it won't, or can't, help you? But are you content so? For that is the essential condition of the whole business--I will not speak of it in terms of money--are you content to give work? Will you build a bit of wall, suppose--to serve your neighbour, expecting no good of the wall yourself? If so, you must be satisfied to build the wall for the man who wants it built; you must not be resolved first to be sure that he is the best man in the village. Help any one, anyhow you can: so, in order, the greatest possible number will be helped; nay, in the end, perhaps, you may get some shelter from the wind under your charitable wall yourself; but do not expect it, nor lean on any promise that you shall find your bread again, once cast away; I can only say that of what I have chosen to cast fairly on the waters myself, I have never yet, after any number of days, found a crumb. Keep what you want; cast what you can, and expect nothing back, once lost, or once given.  
But for the actual detail of the way in which benefit might thus begin, and diffuse itself, here is an instance close at hand. Yesterday a thunder-shower broke over Verona in the early afternoon; and in a quarter of an hour the streets were an inch deep in water over large spaces, and had little rivers at each side of them. All these little rivers ran away into the large river--the Adige, which plunges down under the bridges of Verona, writhing itself in strong rage; for Verona, with its said bridges, is a kind of lock-gate upon the Adige, half open--lock-gate on the ebbing rain of all the South Tyrolese Alps. The little rivers ran into it, not out of the streets only, but from all the hillsides; millions of sudden streams. If you look at Charles Dickens's letter about the rain in Glencoe, in Mr. Forster's Life of him, it will give you a better idea of the kind of thing than I can, for my forte is really not description, but political economy. Two hours afterwards the sky was clear, the streets dry, the whole thunder-shower was in the Adige, ten miles below Verona, making the best of its way to the sea, after swelling the Po a little (which is inconveniently high already), and I went out with my friends to see the sun set clear, as it was likely to do, and did, over the Tyrolese mountains.  
The place fittest for such purpose is a limestone crag about five miles nearer the hills, rising out of the bed of a torrent, which, as usual, I found a bed only; a little washing of the sand into moist masses here and there being the only evidence of the past rain.  
Above it, where the rocks were dry, we sat down, to draw, or to look; but I was too tired to draw, and cannot any more look at a sunset with comfort, because, now that I am fifty-three, the sun seems to me to set so horribly fast; when one was young, it took its time; but now it always drops like a shell, and before I can get any image of it, is gone, and another day with it.  
So, instead of looking at the sun, I got thinking about the dry bed of the stream, just beneath. Ugly enough it was; cut by occasional inundation irregularly out of the thick masses of old Alpine shingle, nearly every stone of it the size of an ostrich-egg. And, by the way, the average size of shingle in given localities is worth your thinking about, geologically. All through this Veronese plain the stones are mostly of ostrich-egg size and shape; some forty times as big as the pebbles of English shingle (say of the Addington Hills), and not flat nor round; but resolvedly oval. Now there is no reason, that I know of, why large mountains should break into large pebbles, and small ones into small; and indeed the consistent reduction of our own masses of flint, as big as a cauliflower, leaves and all, into the flattish rounded pebble, seldom wider across than half a crown, of the banks of Addington, is just as strange a piece of systematic reduction as the grinding of Monte Baldo into sculpture of ostrich-eggs:--neither of the processes, observe, depending upon questions of time, but of method of fracture.  
The evening drew on, and two peasants who had been cutting hay on a terrace of meadow among the rocks, left their work, and came to look at the sketchers, and make out, if they could, what we wanted on their ground. They did not speak to us, but bright light came into the face of one, evidently the master, on being spoken to, and excuse asked of him for our presence among his rocks, by which he courteously expressed himself as pleased, no less than (though this he did not say) puzzled.](61591.docx#chunk9852)

[Some talk followed, of cold and heat, and anything else one knew the Italian for, or could understand the Veronese for (Veronese being more like Spanish than Italian); and I praised the country, as was just, or at least as I could, and said I should like to live there. Whereupon he commended it also, in measured terms; and said the wine was good. "But the water?" I asked, pointing to the dry river-bed. The water was bitter, he said, and little wholesome. "Why, then, have you let all that thunder-shower go down the Adige, three hours ago?" "That was the way the showers came." "Yes, but not the way they ought to go." (We were standing by the side of a cleft in the limestone which ran down through ledge after ledge, from the top of the cliff, mostly barren; but my farmer's man had led two of his grey oxen to make what they could of supper from the tufts of grass on the sides of it, half an hour before). "If you had ever been at the little pains of throwing half-a-dozen yards of wall here, from rock to rock, you would have had, at this moment, a pool of standing water as big as a mill-pond, kept out of that thunder-shower, which very water, to-morrow morning, will probably be washing away somebody's hay-stack into the Po."  
The above was what I wanted to say; but didn't know the Italian for hay-stack. I got enough out to make the farmer understand what I meant.  
Yes, he said, that would be very good, but "la spesa?"  
"The expense! What would be the expense to you of gathering a few stones from this hillside? And the idle minutes, gathered out of a week, if a neighbour or two joined in the work, could do all the building." He paused at this--the idea of neighbours joining in work appearing to him entirely abortive, and untenable by a rational being. Which indeed, throughout Christendom, it at present is,--thanks to the beautiful instructions and orthodox catechisms impressed by the two great sects of Evangelical and Papal pardoneres on the minds of their respective flocks--(and on their lips also, early enough in the lives of the little bleating things. "Che cosa e la fede?" I heard impetuously interrogated of a seven years' old one, by a conscientious lady in a black gown and white cap, in St. Michael's, at Lucca, and answered in a glib speech a quarter of a minute long). Neither have I ever thought of, far less seriously proposed, such a monstrous thing as that neighbours should help one another; but I have proposed, and do solemnly still propose, that people who have got no neighbours, but are outcasts and Samaritans, as it were, should put whatever twopenny charity they can afford into useful unity of action; and that, caring personally for no one, practically for every one, they should undertake "la spesa" of work that will pay no dividend on their twopences; but will both produce and pour oil and wine where they are most wanted. And I do solemnly propose that the St. George's Company in England, and (please the University of Padua) a St. Anthony's Company in Italy, should positively buy such bits of barren ground as this farmer's at Verona, and make the most of them that agriculture and engineering can.  
  
  
Venice, 23rd June.  
My letter will be a day or two late, I fear, after all; for I can't write this morning, because of the accursed whistling of the dirty steam-engine of the omnibus for Lido, waiting at the quay of the Ducal Palace for the dirty population of Venice, which is now neither fish nor flesh, neither noble nor fisherman--cannot afford to be rowed, nor has strength nor sense enough to row itself; but smokes and spits up and down the piazzetta all day, and gets itself dragged by a screaming kettle to Lido next morning, to sea-bathe itself into capacity for more tobacco.  
Yet I am grateful to the Third Fors for stopping my revise; because just as I was passing by Padua yesterday I chanced upon this fact, which I had forgotten (do me the grace to believe that I knew it twenty years ago), in Antonio Caccianiga's 'Vita Campestre.' [19] "The Venetian Republic founded in Padua"--(wait a minute; for the pigeons are come to my window-sill and I must give them some breakfast)--"founded in Padua, in 1765, the first chair of rural economy appointed in Italy, annexed to it a piece of ground destined for the study, and called Peter Ardouin, a Veronese botanist, to honour the school with his lectures."  
Yes; that is all very fine; nevertheless, I am not quite sure that rural economy, during the 1760 years previous, had not done pretty well without a chair, and on its own legs. For, indeed, since the beginning of those philosophies in the eighteenth century, the Venetian aristocracy has so ill prospered that instead of being any more able to give land at Padua, it cannot so much as keep a poor acre of it decent before its own Ducal Palace, in Venice; nor hinder this miserable mob, which has not brains enough to know so much as what o'clock it is, nor sense enough so much as to go aboard a boat without being whistled for like dogs, from choking the sweet sea air with pitch-black smoke, and filling it with entirely devilish noise, which no properly bred human being could endure within a quarter of a mile of them--that so they may be sufficiently assisted and persuaded to embark, for the washing of themselves, at the Palace quay.](61591.docx#chunk9853)

[It is a strange pass for things to have reached, under politic aristocracies and learned professors; but the policy and learning became useless, through the same kind of mistake on both sides. The professors of botany forgot that botany, in its original Greek, meant a science of things to be eaten; they pursued it only as a science of things to be named. And the politic aristocracy forgot that their own "bestness" consisted essentially in their being fit--in a figurative manner--to be eaten, and fancied rather that their superiority was of a titular character, and that the beauty and power of their order lay wholly in being fit to be--named.  
I must go back to my wall-building, however, for a minute or two more, because you might probably think that my answer to the farmer's objection about expense, (even if I had possessed Italian enough to make it intelligible,) would have been an insufficient one; and that the operation of embanking hill-sides so as to stay the rain-flow, is a work of enormous cost and difficulty.  
Indeed, a work productive of good so infinite as this would be, and contending for rule over the grandest forces of nature, cannot be altogether cheap, nor altogether facile. But spend annually one-tenth of the sum you now give to build embankments against imaginary enemies, in building embankments for the help of people whom you may easily make your real friends,--and see whether your budget does not become more satisfactory, so; and, above all, learn a little hydraulics.  
I wasted some good time, a year or two since, over a sensational novel in one of our magazines, which I thought would tell me more of what the public were thinking about strikes than I could learn elsewhere. But it spent itself in dramatic effects with lucifer matches, and I learned nothing from it, and the public mislearned much. It ended, (no, I believe it didn't end,--but I read no farther,) with the bursting of a reservoir, and the floating away of a village. The hero, as far as I recollect, was in the half of a house which was just going to be washed down; and the anti-hero was opposite him, in the half of a tree which was just going to be torn up; and the heroine was floating between them down the stream, and one wasn't to know, till next month, which would catch her. But the hydraulics were the essentially bad part of the book, for the author made great play with the tremendous weight of water against his embankment;--it never having occurred to him that the gate of a Liverpool dry dock can keep out--and could just as easily for that matter keep in--the Atlantic Ocean, to the necessary depth in feet and inches; the depth giving the pressure, not the superficies.  
Nay, you may see, not unfrequently, on Margate sands, your own six-years-old engineers of children keep out the Atlantic ocean quite successfully, for a little while, from a favourite hole; the difficulty being not at all in keeping the Atlantic well out at the side, but from surreptitiously finding its way in at the bottom. And that is the real difficulty for old engineers; properly the only one; you must not let the Atlantic begin to run surreptitiously either in or out, else it soon becomes difficult to stop; and all reservoirs ought to be wide, not deep, when they are artificial, and should not be immediately above villages (though they might always be made perfectly safe merely by dividing them by walls, so that the contents could not run out all at once). But when reservoirs are not artificial, when the natural rocks, with adamantine wall, and embankment built up from the earth's centre, are ready to catch the rain for you, and render it back as pure as their own crystal,--if you will only here and there throw an iron valve across a cleft,--believe me--if you choose to have a dividend out of Heaven, and sell the Rain, you may get it a good deal more easily and at a figure or two higher per cent. than you can on diaphanous mustard. There are certainly few men of my age who have watched the ways of Alpine torrents so closely as I have (and you need not think my knowing something of art prevents me from understanding them, for the first good canal-engineer in Italy was Lionardo da Vinci, and more drawings of water-wheels and water-eddies exist of his, by far, than studies of hair and eyes); and the one strong impression I have respecting them is their utter docility and passiveness, if you will educate them young. But our wise engineers invariably try to manage faggots instead of sticks; and, leaving the rivulets of the Viso without training, debate what bridle is to be put in the mouth of the Po! Which, by the way, is a running reservoir, considerably above the level of the plain of Lombardy; and if the bank of that one should break, any summer's day, there will be news of it, and more cities than Venice with water in their streets.  
  
  
June 24th.  
You must be content with a short letter (I wish I could flatter myself you would like a longer one) this month; but you will probably see some news of the weather here, yesterday afternoon, which will give some emphasis to what I have been saying, not for the first time by any means; and so I leave you to think of it, and remain  
  
Faithfully yours,  
J. RUSKIN.  
  
  
  
  
NOTES AND CORRESPONDENCE.](61591.docx#chunk9854)

[I have received from Wells, in Somersetshire, thirty pounds for the St. George's Fund, the first money sent me by a stranger. For what has been given me by my personal friends I will account to them privately; and, henceforward, will accept no more given in their courteous prejudice, lest other friends, who do not believe in my crotchets, should be made uncomfortable. I am not quite sure if the sender of this money from Somersetshire would like his name to appear in so wide solitude; and therefore content myself with thus thanking him, and formally opening my accounts.  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
FORS CLAVIGERA.  
LETTER XX.  
  
Venice, 3rd July, 1872.  
My Friends,  
  
You probably thought I had lost my temper, and written inconsiderately, when I called the whistling of the Lido steamer 'accursed.'  
I never wrote more considerately; using the longer and weaker word 'accursed' instead of the simple and proper one, 'cursed,' to take away, as far as I could, the appearance of unseemly haste; and using the expression itself on set purpose, not merely as the fittest for the occasion, but because I have more to tell you respecting the general benediction engraved on the bell of Lucca, and the particular benediction bestowed on the Marquis of B.; several things more, indeed, of importance for you to know, about blessing and cursing.  
Some of you may perhaps remember the saying of St. James about the tongue: "Therewith bless we God, and therewith curse we men; out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be."  
It is not clear whether St. James means that there should be no cursing at all, (which I suppose he does,) or merely that the blessing and cursing should not be uttered by the same lips. But his meaning, whatever it was, did not, in the issue, matter; for the Church of Christendom has always ignored this text altogether, and appointed the same persons in authority to deliver on all needful occasions, benediction or malediction, as either might appear to them due; while our own most learned sect, wielding State power, has not only appointed a formal service of malediction in Lent, but commanded the Psalms of David, in which the blessing and cursing are inlaid as closely as the black and white in a mosaic floor, to be solemnly sung through once a month.  
I do not wish, however, to-day to speak to you of the practice of the churches; but of your own, which, observe, is in one respect singularly different. All the churches, of late years, paying less and less attention to the discipline of their people, have felt an increasing compunction in cursing them when they did wrong; while also, the wrong doing, through such neglect of discipline, becoming every day more complex, ecclesiastical authorities perceived that, if delivered with impartiality, the cursing must be so general, and the blessing so defined, as to give their services an entirely unpopular character.  
Now, there is a little screw steamer just passing, with no deck, an omnibus cabin, a flag at both ends, and a single passenger; she is not twelve yards long, yet the beating of her screw has been so loud across the lagoon for the last five minutes, that I thought it must be a large new steamer coming in from the sea, and left my work to go and look.  
Before I had finished writing that last sentence, the cry of a boy selling something black out of a basket on the quay became so sharply distinguished above the voices of the always-debating gondoliers, that I must needs stop again, and go down to the quay to see what he had got to sell. They were half-rotten figs, shaken down, untimely, by the midsummer storms: his cry of "Fighiaie" scarcely ceased, being delivered, as I observed, just as clearly between his legs, when he was stooping to find an eatable portion of the black mess to serve a customer with, as when he was standing up. His face brought the tears into my eyes, so open, and sweet, and capable it was; and so sad. I gave him three very small halfpence, but took no figs, to his surprise: he little thought how cheap the sight of him and his basket was to me, at the money; nor what this fruit, "that could not be eaten, it was so evil," sold cheap before the palace of the Dukes of Venice, meant, to any one who could read signs, either in earth, or her heaven and sea. [20]  
Well; the blessing, as I said, not being now often legitimately applicable to particular people by Christian priests, they gradually fell into the habit of giving it of pure grace and courtesy to their congregations; or more especially to poor persons, instead of money, or to rich ones, in exchange for it,--or generally to any one to whom they wished to be polite: while, on the contrary, the cursing, having now become widely applicable, and even necessary, was left to be understood, but not expressed; and at last, to all practical purpose, abandoned altogether, (the rather that it had become very disputable whether it ever did any one the least mischief); so that, at this time being, the Pope, in his charmingest manner, blesses the bridecake of the Marquis of B., making, as it were, an ornamental confectionery figure of himself on the top of it; but has not, in anywise, courage to curse the King of Italy, although that penniless monarch has confiscated the revenues of every time-honoured religious institution in Italy; and is about, doubtless, to commission some of the Raphaels in attendance at his court, (though, I believe, grooms are more in request there,) to paint an opposition fresco in the Vatican, representing the Sardinian instead of the Syrian Heliodorus, successfully abstracting the treasures of the temple, and triumphantly putting its angels to flight.](61591.docx#chunk9855)

[Now the curious difference between your practice, and the Church's, to which I wish to-day to direct your attention, is, that while thus the clergy, in what efforts they make to retain their influence over human mind, use cursing little, and blessing much, you working-men more and more frankly every day adopt the exactly contrary practice of using benediction little, and cursing much: so that, even in the ordinary course of conversation among yourselves, you very rarely bless, audibly, so much as one of your own children; but not unfrequently damn, audibly, them, yourselves, and your friends.  
I wish you to think over the meaning of this habit of yours very carefully with me. I call it a habit of yours, observe, only with reference to your recent adoption of it. You have learned it from your superiors; but they, partly in consequence of your too eager imitation of them, are beginning to mend their manners; and it would excite much surprise, nowadays, in any European court, to hear the reigning monarch address the heir-apparent on an occasion of state festivity, as a Venetian ambassador heard our James the First address Prince Charles,--"Devil take you, why don't you dance?" But, strictly speaking, the prevalence of the habit among all classes of laymen is the point in question.  
  
  
4th July.  
And first, it is necessary that you should understand accurately the difference between swearing and cursing, vulgarly so often confounded. They are entirely different things: the first is invoking the witness of a Spirit to an assertion you wish to make; the second is invoking the assistance of a Spirit, in a mischief you wish to inflict. When ill-educated and ill-tempered people clamorously confuse the two invocations, they are not, in reality, either cursing or swearing; but merely vomiting empty words indecently. True swearing and cursing must always be distinct and solemn; here is an old Latin oath, for instance, which, though borrowed from a stronger Greek one, and much diluted, is still grand:  
"I take to witness the Earth, and the stars, and the sea; the two lights of heaven; the falling and rising of the year; the dark power of the gods of sorrow; the sacredness of unbending Death; and may the Father of all things hear me, who sanctifies covenants with his lightning. For I lay my hand on the altar, and by the fires thereon, and the gods to whom they burn, I swear that no future day shall break this peace for Italy, nor violate the covenant she has made."  
That is old swearing: but the lengthy forms of it appearing partly burdensome to the celerity, and partly superstitious to the wisdom, of modern minds, have been abridged,--in England, for the most part, into the extremely simple "By God;" in France into "Sacred name of God" (often the first word of the sentence only pronounced), and in Italy into "Christ" or "Bacchus;" the superiority of the former Deity being indicated by omitting the preposition before the name. The oaths are "Christ,"--never "by Christ;" and "by Bacchus,"--never "Bacchus."  
Observe also that swearing is only by extremely ignorant persons supposed to be an infringement of the Third Commandment. It is disobedience to the teaching of Christ; but the Third Commandment has nothing to do with the matter. People do not take the name of God in vain when they swear; they use it, on the contrary, very earnestly and energetically to attest what they wish to say. But when the Monster Concert at Boston begins, on the English day, with the hymn, "The will of God be done," while the audience know perfectly well that there is not one in a thousand of them who is trying to do it, or who would have it done, if he could help it, unless it was his own will too,--that is taking the name of God in vain, with a vengeance.  
Cursing, on the other hand, is invoking the aid of a Spirit to a harm you wish to see accomplished, but which is too great for your own immediate power: and to-day I wish to point out to you what intensity of faith in the existence and activity of a spiritual world is evinced by the curse which is characteristic of the English tongue.  
For, observe, habitual as it has become, there is still so much life and sincerity in the expression, that we all feel our passion partly appeased in its use; and the more serious the occasion, the more practical and effective the cursing becomes. In Mr. Kinglake's "History of the Crimean War," you will find the --th Regiment at Alma is stated to have been materially assisted in maintaining position quite vital to the battle by the steady imprecation delivered at it by its colonel for half an hour on end. No quantity of benediction would have answered the purpose; the colonel might have said, "Bless you, my children," in the tenderest tones, as often as he pleased,--yet not have helped his men to keep their ground.  
I want you therefore, first, to consider how it happens that cursing seems at present the most effectual means for encouraging human work; and whether it may not be conceivable that the work itself is of a kind which any form of effectual blessing would hinder instead of help. Then, secondly, I want you to consider what faith in a spiritual world is involved in the terms of the curse we usually employ. It has two principal forms; one complete and unqualified, "God damn your soul," implying that the soul is there, and that we cannot be satisfied with less than its destruction: the other, qualified, and on the bodily members only; "God damn your eyes and limbs." It is this last form I wish especially to examine.](61591.docx#chunk9856)

[For how do you suppose that either eye, or ear, or limb, can be damned? What is the spiritual mischief you invoke? Not merely the blinding of the eye, nor palsy of the limb; but the condemnation or judgment of them. And remember that though you are for the most part unconscious of the spiritual meaning of what you say, the instinctive satisfaction you have in saying it is as much a real movement of the spirit within you, as the beating of your heart is a real movement of the body, though you are unconscious of that also, till you put your hand on it. Put your hand also, so to speak, upon the source of the satisfaction with which you use this curse; and ascertain the law of it.  
Now this you may best do by considering what it is which will make the eyes and the limbs blessed. For the precise contrary of that must be their damnation. What do you think was the meaning of that saying of Christ's, "Blessed are the eyes which see the things that ye see"? For to be made evermore incapable of seeing such things, must be the condemnation of the eyes. It is not merely the capacity of seeing sunshine, which is their blessing; but of seeing certain things under the sunshine; nay, perhaps, even without sunshine, the eye itself becoming a Sun. Therefore, on the other hand, the curse upon the eyes will not be mere blindness to the daylight, but blindness to particular things under the daylight; so that, when directed towards these, the eye itself becomes as the Night.  
Again, with regard to the limbs, or general powers of the body. Do you suppose that when it is promised that "the lame man shall leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing"--(Steam-whistle interrupts me from the Capo d' Istria, which is lying in front of my window with her black nose pointed at the red nose of another steamer at the next pier. There are nine large ones at this instant,--half-past six, morning, 4th July,--lying between the Church of the Redeemer and the Canal of the Arsenal; one of them an iron-clad, five smoking fiercely, and the biggest,--English, and half a quarter of a mile long,--blowing steam from all manner of pipes in her sides, and with such a roar through her funnel--whistle number two from Capo d' Istria--that I could not make any one hear me speak in this room without an effort,)--do you suppose, I say, that such a form of benediction is just the same as saying that the lame man shall leap as a lion, and the tongue of the dumb mourn? Not so, but a special manner of action of the members is meant in both cases: (whistle number three from Capo d' Istria; I am writing on, steadily, so that you will be able to form an accurate idea, from this page, of the intervals of time in modern music. The roaring from the English boat goes on all the while, for bass to the Capo d' Istria's treble, and a tenth steamer comes in sight round the Armenian Monastery)--a particular kind of activity is meant, I repeat, in both cases. The lame man is to leap, (whistle fourth from Capo d' Istria, this time at high-pressure, going through my head like a knife,) as an innocent and joyful creature leaps, and the lips of the dumb to move melodiously: they are to be blest, so; may not be unblest even in silence; but are the absolute contrary of blest, in evil utterance. (Fifth whistle, a double one, from Capo d' Istria, and it is seven o'clock, nearly; and here's my coffee, and I must stop writing. Sixth whistle--the Capo d' Istria is off, with her crew of morning bathers. Seventh,--from I don't know which of the boats outside--and I count no more.)  
  
  
5th July.  
Yesterday, in these broken sentences, I tried to make you understand that for all human creatures there are necessarily three separate states: life positive, under blessing,--life negative, under curse,--and death, neutral between these; and, henceforward, take due note of the quite true assumption you make in your ordinary malediction, that the state of condemnation may begin in this world, and separately affect every living member of the body.  
You assume the fact of these two opposite states, then; but you have no idea whatever of the meaning of your words, nor of the nature of the blessedness or condemnation you admit. I will try to make your conception clearer.  
In the year 1869, just before leaving Venice, I had been carefully looking at a picture by Victor Carpaccio, representing the dream of a young princess. Carpaccio has taken much pains to explain to us, as far as he can, the kind of life she leads, by completely painting her little bedroom in the light of dawn, so that you can see everything in it. It is lighted by two doubly-arched windows, the arches being painted crimson round their edges, and the capitals of the shafts that bear them, gilded. They are filled at the top with small round panes of glass; but beneath, are open to the blue morning sky, with a low lattice across them: and in the one at the back of the room are set two beautiful white Greek vases with a plant in each; one having rich dark and pointed green leaves, the other crimson flowers, but not of any species known to me, each at the end of a branch like a spray of heath.](61591.docx#chunk9857)

[These flower-pots stand on a shelf which runs all round the room, and beneath the window, at about the height of the elbow, and serves to put things on anywhere: beneath it, down to the floor, the walls are covered with green cloth; but above, are bare and white. The second window is nearly opposite the bed, and in front of it is the princess's reading-table, some two feet and a half square, covered by a red cloth with a white border and dainty fringe; and beside it her seat, not at all like a reading chair in Oxford, but a very small three-legged stool like a music-stool, covered with crimson cloth. On the table are a book set up at a slope fittest for reading, and an hour-glass. Under the shelf, near the table, so as to be easily reached by the outstretched arm, is a press full of books. The door of this has been left open, and the books, I am grieved to say, are rather in disorder, having been pulled about before the princess went to bed, and one left standing on its side.  
Opposite this window, on the white wall, is a small shrine or picture, (I can't see which, for it is in sharp retiring perspective,) with a lamp before it, and a silver vessel hung from the lamp, looking like one for holding incense.  
The bed is a broad four-poster, the posts being beautifully wrought golden or gilded rods, variously wreathed and branched, carrying a canopy of warm red. The princess's shield is at the head of it, and the feet are raised entirely above the floor of the room, on a dais which projects at the lower end so as to form a seat, on which the child has laid her crown. Her little blue slippers lie at the side of the bed,--her white dog beside them. The coverlid is scarlet, the white sheet folded half way back over it; the young girl lies straight, bending neither at waist nor knee, the sheet rising and falling over her in a narrow unbroken wave, like the shape of the coverlid of the last sleep, when the turf scarcely rises. She is some seventeen or eighteen years old, her head is turned towards us on the pillow, the cheek resting on her hand, as if she were thinking, yet utterly calm in sleep, and almost colourless. Her hair is tied with a narrow riband, and divided into two wreaths, which encircle her head like a double crown. The white nightgown hides the arm raised on the pillow, down to the wrist.  
At the door of the room an angel enters; (the little dog, though lying awake, vigilant, takes no notice.) He is a very small angel, his head just, rises a little above the shelf round the room, and would only reach as high as the princess's chin, if she were standing up. He has soft grey wings, lustreless; and his dress, of subdued blue, has violet sleeves, open above the elbow, and showing white sleeves below. He comes in without haste, his body, like a mortal one, casting shadow from the light through the door behind, his face perfectly quiet; a palm-branch in his right hand--a scroll in his left.  
So dreams the princess, with blessed eyes, that need no earthly dawn. It is very pretty of Carpaccio to make her dream out the angel's dress so particularly, and notice the slashed sleeves; and to dream so little an angel--very nearly a doll angel,--bringing her the branch of palm, and message. But the lovely characteristic of all is the evident delight of her continual life. Royal power over herself, and happiness in her flowers, her books, her sleeping and waking, her prayers, her dreams, her earth, her heaven.  
After I had spent my morning over this picture, I had to go to Verona by the afternoon train. In the carriage with me were two American girls with their father and mother, people of the class which has lately made so much money suddenly, and does not know what to do with it: and these two girls, of about fifteen and eighteen, had evidently been indulged in everything (since they had had the means) which western civilization could imagine. And here they were, specimens of the utmost which the money and invention of the nineteenth century could produce in maidenhood,--children of its most progressive race,--enjoying the full advantages of political liberty, of enlightened philosophical education, of cheap pilfered literature, and of luxury at any cost. Whatever money, machinery, or freedom of thought could do for these two children, had been done. No superstition had deceived, no restraint degraded them:--types, they could not but be, of maidenly wisdom and felicity, as conceived by the forwardest intellects of our time.  
And they were travelling through a district which, if any in the world, should touch the hearts and delight the eyes of young girls. Between Venice and Verona! Portia's villa perhaps in sight upon the Brenta,--Juliet's tomb to be visited in the evening,--blue against the southern sky, the hills of Petrarch's home. Exquisite midsummer sunshine, with low rays, glanced through the vine-leaves; all the Alps were clear, from the lake of Garda to Cadore, and to farthest Tyrol. What a princess's chamber, this, if these are princesses, and what dreams might they not dream, therein!](61591.docx#chunk9858)

[But the two American girls were neither princesses, nor seers, nor dreamers. By infinite self-indulgence, they had reduced themselves simply to two pieces of white putty that could feel pain. The flies and the dust stuck to them as to clay, and they perceived, between Venice and Verona, nothing but the flies and the dust. They pulled down the blinds the moment they entered the carriage, and then sprawled, and writhed, and tossed among the cushions of it, in vain contest, during the whole fifty miles, with every miserable sensation of bodily affliction that could make time intolerable. They were dressed in thin white frocks, coming vaguely open at the backs as they stretched or wriggled; they had French novels, lemons, and lumps of sugar, to beguile their state with; the novels hanging together by the ends of string that had once stitched them, or adhering at the corners in densely bruised dog's-ears, out of which the girls, wetting their fingers, occasionally extricated a gluey leaf. From time to time they cut a lemon open, ground a lump of sugar backwards and forwards over it till every fibre was in a treacly pulp; then sucked the pulp, and gnawed the white skin into leathery strings, for the sake of its bitter. Only one sentence was exchanged, in the fifty miles, on the subject of things outside the carriage (the Alps being once visible from a station where they had drawn up the blinds).  
"Don't those snow-caps make you cool?"  
"No--I wish they did."  
And so they went their way, with sealed eyes and tormented limbs, their numbered miles of pain.  
There are the two states for you, in clearest opposition; Blessed, and Accursed. The happy industry, and eyes full of sacred imagination of things that are not, (such sweet cosa, e la fede,) and the tortured indolence, and infidel eyes, blind even to the things that are.  
"How do I know the princess is industrious?"  
Partly by the trim state of her room,--by the hour-glass on the table,--by the evident use of all the books she has, (well bound, every one of them, in stoutest leather or velvet, and with no dog's-ears,) but more distinctly from another picture of her, not asleep. In that one, a prince of England has sent to ask her in marriage: and her father, little liking to part with her, sends for her to his room to ask her what she would do. He sits, moody and sorrowful; she, standing before him in a plain housewifely dress, talks quietly, going on with her needlework all the time.  
A work-woman, friends, she, no less than a princess; and princess most in being so. In like manner, in a picture by a Florentine, whose mind I would fain have you know somewhat, as well as Carpaccio's--Sandro Botticelli--the girl who is to be the wife of Moses, when he first sees her at the desert-well, has fruit in her left hand, but a distaff in her right. [21]  
"To do good work, whether you live or die," it is the entrance to all Princedoms; and if not done, the day will come, and that infallibly, when you must labour for evil instead of good.  
It was some comfort to me, that second of May last, at Pisa, to watch the workman's ashamed face, as he struck the old marble cross to pieces. Stolidly and languidly he dealt the blows,--down-looking,--so far as in anywise sensitive, ashamed,--and well he might be.  
It was a wonderful thing to see done. This Pisan chapel, first built in 1230, then called the Oracle, or Oratory,--"Oraculum, vel Oratorium"--of the Blessed Mary of the New Bridge, afterwards called the Sea-bridge, (Ponte-a-Mare,) was a shrine like that of ours on the bridge of Wakefield; a boatman's praying-place: you may still see, or might, ten years since, have seen, the use of such a thing at the mouth of Boulogne Harbour, when the mackerel boats went out in a fleet at early dawn. There used to be a little shrine at the end of the longest pier; and as the Bonne Esperance, or Grace-de-Dieu, or Vierge Marie, or Notre Dame des Dunes, or Reine des Anges, rose on the first surge of the open sea, their crews bared their heads, and prayed for a few seconds. So also the Pisan oarsmen looked back to their shrine, many-pinnacled, standing out from the quay above the river, as they dropped down Arno under their sea bridge, bound for the Isles of Greece. Later, in the fifteenth century, "there was laid up in it a little branch of the Crown of Thorns of the Redeemer which a merchant had brought home, enclosed in a little urn of Beyond-sea" (ultramarine), and its name was changed to "St. Mary's of the Thorn."  
In the year 1840 I first drew it, then as perfect as when it was built. Six hundred and ten years had only given the marble of it a tempered glow, or touched its sculpture here and there, with softer shade. I daguerreotyped the eastern end of it some years later, (photography being then unknown,) and copied the daguerreotype, that people might not be plagued in looking, by the lustre. The frontispiece to this letter is engraved from the drawing, and will show you what the building was like.](61591.docx#chunk9859)

[But the last quarter of a century has brought changes, and made the Italians wiser. British Protestant missionaries explained to them that they had only got a piece of blackberry stem in their ultramarine box. German philosophical missionaries explained to them that the Crown of Thorns itself was only a graceful metaphor. French republican missionaries explained to them that chapels were inconsistent with liberty on the quay; and their own Engineering missionaries of civilization explained to them that steam-power was independent of the Madonna. And now in 1872, rowing by steam, digging by steam, driving by steam, here, behold, are a troublesome pair of human arms out of employ. So the Engineering missionaries fit them with hammer and chisel, and set them to break up the Spina Chapel.  
A costly kind of stone-breaking, this, for Italian parishes to set paupers on! Are there not rocks enough of Apennine, think you, they could break down instead? For truly, the God of their Fathers, and of their land, would rather see them mar His own work, than his children's.  
  
Believe me, faithfully yours,  
JOHN RUSKIN.  
  
  
  
  
NOTES AND CORRESPONDENCE.  
  
Norwood, S.E. June 5th.  
Dear Mr. Ruskin,  
  
Will you allow me to inform you that the utterance which you attribute to me, on the 12th page of this month's Fors Clavigera, is quite wrongly assigned.  
It is impossible that you should at any time have heard me say from my pulpit what you ascribe to me. Simply because I never said it, and could not--not at all believing it.  
I can only account for your misrepresentation by supposing that during my absence from home, from February until the end of June, in the year 1870, or again in July and August of last year, you may have mistaken for me--some other person--doing duty in my stead.  
Of course it is of no consequence to the readers of Fors Clavigera what "the Rev. Mr. Tipple" says or does not say; but you will understand that to "the Rev. Mr. Tipple" himself, it is of consequence--to be exhibited in its pages--with words on his lips which are wholly at variance with what he believes, and is engaged in trying to teach.  
Will you be kind enough, therefore, to correct the error into which you have fallen in your next number?  
  
I am yours truly,  
S. A. Tipple.  
  
  
If Mr. Tipple had been as unselfish as he is modest, and had considered in anywise what was of consequence to the readers of Fors Clavigera, as well as of consequence to himself, he would not have left them without some explanation of his eagerness to disclaim the doctrine attributed to him, however erroneously, in the passage he refers to. No words, I beg him to observe, are attributed to him. In quoting actual expression I always use inverted commas. The passage in question is the best abstract I could write of a piece of sermon which occupied some five minutes in delivery, and which I myself heard delivered in Mr. Tipple's chapel, and not, certainly, by Mr. Tipple's substitute in 1870, for my father and I had long talk over the passage when we came out; and my father died in 1864. But I have ever since kept note of this, now so hastily abjured, utterance, as the most perfect and clear statement of the great Evangelical doctrine of salvation by faith only which I ever heard from any English divine. My abstract of it is more logical than eloquent, but I answer absolutely for its accuracy, and for the specification of "thieves" and "devourers of widows' houses" by the preacher: and I am sure that some at least of the readers of Fors Clavigera will think it of consequence to know how Mr. Tipple, disclaiming the statement even in this undecorated form, can reconcile it with his conscience to remain the instructor of a Protestant congregation.  
For my own part, I can only say that I publish his letter with extreme pleasure; and, recommending him, for the future, to examine more accurately into the tenets of his substitutes, congratulate him on his vigorous repudiation of a doctrine which the Church of England most wisely describes as being "very full of comfort," but which, she ought farther to have observed, is much more comfortable to rogues than to honest people.  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
FORS CLAVIGERA.  
LETTER XXI.  
  
Dulwich, 10th August, 1872.  
My Friends,  
  
I have not yet fully treated the subject of my last letter, for I must show you how things, as well as people, may be blessed, or cursed; and to show you that, I must explain to you the story of Achan the son of Carmi, which, too probably, you don't feel at present any special interest in; as well as several matters more about steam-engines and steam-whistling: but, in the meantime, here is my lost bit of letter from Florence, written in continuation of the June number; and it is well that it should be put into place at once, (I see that it notices, incidentally, some of the noises in Florence, which might with advantage cease) since it answers the complaints of two aggrieved readers.  
  
  
Florence, 10th June, 1872.  
In the page for correspondence you will find a letter from a workman, interesting in many respects; and besides, sufficiently representing the kind of expostulation now constantly made with me, on my not advertising either these letters, or any other of my writings. These remonstrances, founded as they always are, very politely, on the assumption that every one who reads my books derives extraordinary benefit from them, require from me, at least, the courtesy of more definite answer than I have hitherto found time to give.  
In the first place, my correspondents write under the conviction,--a very natural one,--that no individual practice can have the smallest power to change or check the vast system of modern commerce, or the methods of its transaction.](61591.docx#chunk9860)

[I, on the contrary, am convinced that it is by his personal conduct that any man of ordinary power will do the greatest amount of good that is in him to do; and when I consider the quantity of wise talking which has passed in at one long ear of the world, and out at the other, without making the smallest impression upon its mind, I am sometimes tempted for the rest of my life to try and do what seems to me rational, silently; and to speak no more.  
But were it only for the exciting of earnest talk, action is highly desirable, and is, in itself, advertisement of the best. If, for instance, I had only written in these letters that I disapproved of advertisements, and had gone on advertising the letters themselves, you would have passed by my statement contemptuously, as one in which I did not believe myself. But now, most of my readers are interested in the opinion, dispute it eagerly, and are ready to hear patiently what I can say in its defence.  
For main defence of it, I reply (now definitely to my correspondent of the Black Country):--You ought to read books, as you take medicine, by advice, and not advertisement. Perhaps, however, you do take medicine by advertisement, but you will not, I suppose, venture to call that a wise proceeding? Every good physician, at all events, knows it to be an unwise one, and will by no means consent to proclaim even his favourite pills by the town-crier. But perhaps you have no literary physician,--no friend to whom you can go and say, "I want to learn what is true on such a subject--what book must I read?" You prefer exercising your independent judgment, and you expect me to appeal to it, by paying for the insertion in all the penny papers of a paragraph that may win your confidence. As, for instance, "Just published, the --th number of 'Fors Clavigera,' containing the most important information on the existing state of trade in Europe; and on all subjects interesting to the British Operative. Thousandth thousand. Price 7d. 7 for 3s. 6d. Proportional abatement an large orders. No intelligent workman should pass a day without acquainting himself with the entirely original views contained in these pages."  
You don't want to be advised in that manner, do you say? but only to know that such a book exists. What good would its existence do you, if you did not know whether it was worth reading? Were you as rich as Croesus, you have no business to spend such a sum as 7d. unless you are sure of your money's worth. Ask some one who knows good books from bad ones to tell you what to buy, and be content. You will hear of 'Fors,' so, in time;--if it be worth hearing of.  
But you have no acquaintance, you say, among people who know good books from bad ones? Possibly not; and yet, half the poor gentlemen of England are fain now-a-days to live by selling their opinions on this subject. It is a bad trade, let me tell them. Whatever judgment they have, likely to be useful to the human beings about them, may be expressed in few words; and those words of sacred advice ought not to be articles of commerce. Least of all ought they to be so ingeniously concocted that idle readers may remain content with reading their eloquent account of a book, instead of the book itself. It is an evil trade, and in our company of Mont Rose, we will have no reviewers; we will have, once for all, our book Gazette, issued every 1st of January, naming, under alphabetical list of authors and of titles, whatever serviceable or worthy writings have been published during the past year; and if, in the space of the year following, we have become acquainted with the same thoroughly, our time will not have been ill-spent, though we hear of no new book for twelve months. And the choice of the books to be named, as well as the brief accounts of them given in our Gazette, will be by persons not paid for their opinions, and who will not, therefore, express themselves voluminously.  
Meantime, your newspapers being your present advisers, I beg you to observe that a number of 'Fors' is duly sent to all the principal ones, whose editors may notice it if they choose; but I will not pay for their notice, nor for any man's.  
These, then, are my immediate reasons for not advertising. Indirect ones, I have, which weigh with me no less. I write this morning, wearily, and without spirit, being nearly deaf with the bell-ringing and bawling which goes on here, at Florence, ceaselessly, in advertisement of prayers, and wares; as if people could not wait on God for what they wanted, but God had to ring for them, like waiters, for what He wanted: and as if they could think of nothing they were in need of, till the need was suggested to them by bellowing at their doors, or bill-posting on their house-corners. Indeed, the fresco-painting of the bill-sticker is likely, so far as I see, to become the principal fine art of modern Europe: here, at all events, it is now the principal source of street effect. Giotto's time is past, like Oderigi's; but the bill-poster succeeds: and the Ponte Vecchio, the principal thoroughfare across the Arno, is on one side plastered over with bills in the exact centre, while the other side, for various reasons not to be specified, is little available to passengers.](61591.docx#chunk9861)

[The bills on the bridge are theatrical, announcing cheap operas; but religious bills, inviting to ecclesiastical festivities, are similarly plastered over the front of the church once called "the Bride" for its beauty; and the pious bill-stickers paste them ingeniously in and out upon the sculptured bearings of the shields of the old Florentine knights. Political bills, in various stages of decomposition, decorate the street-corners and sheds of the markets; and among the last year's rags of these, one may still read here and there the heroic apostrophe, "Rome! or Death."  
It never was clear to me, until now, what the desperately-minded persons who found themselves in that dilemma, wanted with Rome; and now it is quite clear to me that they never did want it,--but only the ground it was once built on, for finance offices and railroad stations; or, it may be, for new graves, when Death, to young Italy, as to old, comes without alternative. For, indeed, young Italy has just chosen the most precious piece of ground above Florence, and a twelfth-century church in the midst of it, to bury itself in, at its leisure; and make the summer air loathsome and pestiferous, from San Miniato to Arcetri.  
No Rome, I repeat, did young Italy want; but only the site of Rome. Three days before I left it, I went to see a piece not merely of the rampart, but of the actual wall, of Tullius, which zealous Mr. Parker with fortunate excavation has just laid open on the Aventine. Fifty feet of blocks of massy stone, duly laid; not one shifted; a wall which was just eighteen hundred years old when Westminster Abbey was begun building. I went to see it mainly for your sakes, for after I have got past Theseus and his vegetable soup, I shall have to tell you something of the constitutions of Servius Tullius; and besides, from the sweet slope of vineyard beneath this king's wall, one looks across the fields where Cincinnatus was found ploughing, according to Livy; though, you will find, in Smith's Dictionary, that Mr. Niebuhr "has pointed out all the inconsistencies and impossibilities in this legend;" and that he is "inclined to regard it as altogether fabulous."  
Very possibly it may be so, (not that, for my own poor part, I attach much importance to Niebuhr's "inclinations,") but it is fatally certain that whenever you begin to seek the real authority for legends, you will generally find that the ugly ones have good foundation, and the beautiful ones none. Be prepared for this; and remember that a lovely legend is all the more precious when it has no foundation. Cincinnatus might actually have been found ploughing beside the Tiber fifty times over; and it might have signified little to any one;--least of all to you or me. But if Cincinnatus never was so found, nor ever existed at all in flesh and blood; but the great Roman nation, in its strength of conviction that manual labour in tilling the ground was good and honourable, invented a quite bodiless Cincinnatus; and set him, according to its fancy, in furrows of the field, and put its own words into his mouth, and gave the honour of its ancient deeds into his ghostly hand; this fable, which has no foundation;--this precious coinage of the brain and conscience of a mighty people, you and I--believe me--had better read, and know, and take to heart, diligently.  
Of which at another time: the point in question just now being that this same slope of the Aventine, under the wall of Tullius, falling to the shore of Tiber just where the Roman galleys used to be moored, (the marbles worn by the cables are still in the bank of it there,) and opposite the farm of Cincinnatus, commands, as you may suppose, fresh air and a fine view,--and has just been sold on "building leases."  
Sold, I heard, to an English company; but more probably to the agents of the society which is gradually superseding, with its splendid bills at all the street corners, the last vestiges of "Roma, o morte,"--the "Societa Anonima," for providing lodgings for company in Rome.  
Now this anonymous society, which is about to occupy itself in rebuilding Rome, is of course composed of persons who know nothing whatever about building. They also care about it as little as they know; but they take to building, because they expect to get interest for their money by such operation. Some of them, doubtless, are benevolent persons, who expect to benefit Italy by building, and think that, the more the benefit, the larger will be the dividend. Generally the public notion of such a society would be that it was getting interest for its money in a most legitimate way, by doing useful work, and that Roman comfort and Italian prosperity would be largely promoted by it.](61591.docx#chunk9862)

[But observe in what its dividends will consist. Knowing nothing about architecture, nor caring, it neither can choose, nor will desire to choose, an architect of merit. It will give its business to the person whom it supposes able to build the most attractive mansions at the least cost. Practically, the person who can and will do so, is the architect who knows where to find the worst bricks, the worst iron, and the worst workmen, and who has mastered the cleverest tricks by which to turn these to account. He will turn them to account by giving the external effect to his edifices which he finds likely to be attractive to the majority of the public in search of lodging. He will have stucco mouldings, veneered balconies, and cast-iron pillars: but, as his own commission will be paid on the outlay, he will assuredly make the building costly in some way or other; and he can make it costly with least trouble to himself by putting into it, somewhere, vast masses of merely squared stone, chiselled so as to employ handicraftsmen on whose wages commission can be charged, and who all the year round may be doing the same thing, without giving any trouble by asking for directions. Hence there will be assuredly in the new buildings an immense mass of merely squared or rusticated stones; for these appear magnificent to the public mind,--need no trouble in designing,--and pay a vast commission on the execution.  
The interior apartments will, of course, be made as luxurious as possible; for the taste of the European public is at present practically directed by women of the town; these having the government of the richest of our youth at the time when they spend most freely. And at the very time when the last vestiges of the heroic works of the Roman Monarchy are being destroyed, the base fresco-painting of the worst times of the Empire is being faithfully copied, with perfectly true lascivious instinct, for interior decoration.  
Of such architecture the anonymous society will produce the most it can; and lease it at the highest rents it can; and advertise and extend itself, so as, if possible, at last to rebuild, after its manner, all the great cities of Italy. Now the real moving powers at the bottom of all this are essentially the vanity and lust of the middle classes, all of them seeking to live, if it may be, in a cheap palace, with as much cheap pleasure as they can have in it, and the airs of great people. By 'cheap' pleasure, I mean, as I will show you in explaining the nature of cursed things, pleasure which has not been won by attention, or deserved by toil, but is snatched or forced by wanton passion. But the mechanical power which gives effect to this vanity and lust, is the instinct of the anonymous society, and of other such, to get a dividend by catering for them.  
It has chanced, by help of the Third Fors, (as again and again in the course of these letters the thing to my purpose has been brought before me just when I needed it,) that having to speak of interest of money, and first of the important part of it consisting in rents, I should be able to lay my finger on the point of land in all Europe where the principle of it is, at this moment, doing the most mischief. But, of course, all our great building work is now carried on in the same way; nor will any architecture, properly so called, be now possible for many years in Europe. For true architecture is a thing which puts its builders to cost--not which pays them dividends. If a society chose to organize itself to build the most beautiful houses, and the strongest that it could, either for art's sake, or love's; either palaces for itself, or houses for the poor; such a society would build something worth looking at, but not get dividends. True architecture is built by the man who wants a house for himself, and builds it to his own liking, at his own cost; not for his own gain, to the liking of other people.  
All orders of houses may be beautiful when they are thus built by their master to his own liking. Three streets from me, at this moment, is one of the sixteenth century. The corner stones of it are ten feet long by three broad, and two thick--fifty courses of such, and the cornice; flawless stones, laid as level as a sea-horizon, so that the walls become one solid mass of unalterable rock,--four grey cliffs set square in mid-Florence, some hundred and twenty feet from cornice to ground. The man who meant to live in it built it so; and Titian painted his little grand-daughter for him. He got no dividend by his building--no profit on his picture. House and picture, absolutely untouched by time, remain to this day.  
On the hills about me at Coniston there are also houses built by their owners, according to their means, and pleasure. A few loose stones gathered out of the fields, set one above another to a man's height from the ground; a branch or two of larch, set gable-wise across them,--on these some turf, cut from the next peat moss. It is enough: the owner gets no dividend on his building; but he has covert from wind and rain, and is honourable among the sons of Earth. He has built as best he could, to his own mind.](61591.docx#chunk9863)

[You think that there ought to be no such differences in habitation; that nobody should live in a palace, and nobody under a heap of turf? But if ever you become educated enough to know something about the arts, you will like to see a palace built in noble manner; and if ever you become educated enough to know something about men, you will love some of them so well as to desire that at least they should live in palaces, though you cannot. But it will be long now before you can know much, either about arts or men. The one point you may be assured of is, that your happiness does not at all depend on the size of your house--(or, if it does, rather on its smallness than largeness); but depends entirely on your having peaceful and safe possession of it--on your habits of keeping it clean and in order--on the materials of it being trustworthy, if they are no more than stone and turf--and on your contentment with it, so that gradually you may mend it to your mind, day by day, and leave it to your children a better house than it was.  
To your children, and to theirs, desiring for them that they may live as you have lived; and not strive to forget you, and stammer when any one asks who you were, because, forsooth, they have become fine folks by your help.  
  
  
Euston Hotel, 18th August.  
Thus far I had written at Florence. To-day I received a severe lesson from a friend whose teaching is always serviceable to me, of which the main effect was to show me that I had been wrong in allowing myself so far in the habit of jesting, either in these letters, or in any other of my books, on grave subjects; and that although what little play I had permitted, rose, as I told you before, out of the nature of the things spoken of, it prevented many readers from understanding me rightly, and was an offence to others. The second effect of the lesson was to show me how vain it was, in the present state of English literature and mind, to expect anybody to attend to the real force of the words I wrote; and that it would be better to spare myself much of the trouble I took in choosing them, and try to get things explained by reiteration instead of precision, or, if I was too proud to do that, to write less myself, and only urge your attention, or aid it, to other people's happier sayings. Which indeed I meant to do, as 'Fors' went on; for I have always thought that more true force of persuasion might be obtained by rightly choosing and arranging what others have said, than by painfully saying it again in one's own way. And since as to the matter which I have to teach you, all the great writers and thinkers of the world are agreed, without any exception whatsoever, it is certain I can teach you better in other men's words than my own, if I can lay my hand at once on what I want of them. And the upshot of the lesson, and of my meditation upon it, is, that henceforward to the end of the year I will try very seriously to explain, as I promised, step by step, the things put questionably in last year's letters. We will conclude therefore first, and as fast as we can, the debate respecting interest of money which was opened in my letter of January, 1871.  
An impatient correspondent of mine, Mr. W. C. Sillar, who has long been hotly engaged in testifying publicly against the wickedness of taking interest, writes to me that all I say is mysterious, that I am bound to speak plainly, and, above everything, if I think taking interest sinful, not to hold bank stock.](61591.docx#chunk9864)

[Once for all, then, Mr. Sillar is wholly right as to the abstract fact that lending for gain is sinful; and he has in various pamphlets, shown unanswerably that whatever is said either in the Bible, or in any other good and ancient book, respecting usury, is intended by the writers to apply to the receiving of interest, be it ever so little. But Mr. Sillar has allowed this idea to take possession of him, body and soul; and is just as fondly enthusiastic about abolition of usury as some other people are about the liquor laws. Now of course drunkenness is mischievous, and usury is mischievous, and whoredom is mischievous, and idleness is mischievous. But we cannot reform the world by preaching temperance only, nor refusal of interest only, nor chastity only, nor industry only. I am myself more set on teaching healthful industry than anything else, as the beginning of all redemption; then, purity of heart and body; if I can get these taught, I know that nobody so taught will either get drunk, or, in any unjust manner, "either a borrower or a lender be." But I expect also far higher results than either of these, on which, being utterly bent, I am very careless about such minor matters as the present conditions either of English brewing or banking. I hold bank stock simply because I suppose it to be safer than any other stock, and I take the interest of it, because though taking interest is, in the abstract, as wrong as war, the entire fabric of society is at present so connected with both usury and war, that it is not possible violently to withdraw, nor wisely to set example of withdrawing, from either evil. I entirely, in the abstract, disapprove of war; yet have the profoundest sympathy with Colonel Yea and his fusiliers at Alma, and only wish I had been there with them. I have by no means equal sympathy either with bankers or landlords; but am certain that for the present it is better that I receive my dividends as usual, and that Miss Hill should continue to collect my rents in Marylebone.  
"Ananias over again, or worse," Mr. Sillar will probably exclaim, when he reads this, and invoke lightning against me. I will abide the issue of his invocation, and only beg him to observe respecting either ancient or modern denunciations of interest, that they are much beside the mark unless they are accompanied with some explanation of the manner in which borrowing and lending, when necessary, can be carried on without it. Neither are often necessary in healthy states of society; but they always must remain so to some extent; and the name "Mount of Pity," [22] given still in French and Italian to the pawnbroker's shop, descends from a time when lending to the poor was as much a work of mercy as giving to them. And both lending and borrowing are virtuous, when the borrowing is prudent, and the lending kind; how much otherwise than kind lending at interest usually is, you, I suppose, do not need to be told; but how much otherwise than prudent nearly all borrowing is, and above everything, trade on a large scale on borrowed capital, it is very necessary for us all to be told. And for a beginning of other people's words, here are some quoted by Mr. Sillar from a work on the Labour question recently published in Canada, which, though common-place, and evidently the expressions of a person imperfectly educated, are true, earnest, and worth your reading:--  
  
"These Scripture usury laws, then, are for no particular race and for no particular time. They lie at the very foundations of national progress and wealth. They form the only great safeguards of labour, and are the security of civil society, and the strength and protection of commerce itself. Let us beware, for our own sakes, how we lay our hand upon the barriers which God has reared around the humble dwelling of the labouring man....  
"Business itself is a pleasure, but it is the anxieties and burdens of business arising all out of this debt system, which have caused so many aching pillows and so many broken hearts. What countless multitudes, during the last three hundred years, have gone down to bankruptcy and shame--what fair prospects have been for ever blighted--what happy homes desolated--what peace destroyed--what ruin and destruction have ever marched hand in hand with this system of debt, paper, and usury! Verily its sins have reached unto heaven and its iniquities are very great.  
"What shall the end of these things be? God only knoweth. I fear the system is beyond a cure. All the great interests of humanity are overborne by it, and nothing can flourish as it ought till it is taken out of the way. It contains within itself, as we have at times witnessed, most potent elements of destruction which in one hour may bring all its riches to nought."  
  
Here, lastly for this month, is another piece of Marmontel for you, describing an ideal landlord's mode of "investing" his money; losing, as it appears, half his income annually by such investment, yet by no means with "aching pillows" or broken hearts for the result. (By the way, for a lesson in writing, observe that I know the Canada author to be imperfectly educated merely by one such phrase as "aching pillow"--for pillows don't ache--and again, by his thinking it religious and impressive to say "knoweth" instead of "knows.") But listen to Marmontel.](61591.docx#chunk9865)

["In the neighbourhood of this country-house lived a kind of Philosopher, not an old one, but in the prime of life, who, after having enjoyed everything that he could during six months of the year in town, was in the habit of coming to enjoy six months of his own company in a voluptuous solitude. He presently came to call upon Elise. 'You have the reputation of a wise man, sir,' she said--'tell me, what is your plan of life?' 'My plan, madame? I have never had any,' answered the count. 'I do everything that amuses me. I seek everything that I like, and I avoid with care everything that annoys or displeases me.' 'Do you live alone, or do you see people?' asked Elise. 'I see sometimes our clergyman, whom I lecture on morals. I chat with labourers, who are better informed than all our servants. I give balls to little village girls, the prettiest in the world. I arrange little lotteries for them, of laces and ribands.' (Wrong, Mr. Philosopher: as many ribands as you please; but no lotteries.) 'What?' said Elise, with great surprise, 'do those sort of people know what love is?' 'Better than we do, madame--better than we do a hundred times; they love each other like turtle-doves--they make me wish to be married myself!' 'You will confess, however,' said Elise, 'that they love without any delicacy.' 'Nay, madame, delicacy is a refinement of art--they have only the instincts of nature; but, indeed, they have in feeling what we have only in fancy. I have tried, like another, to love, and to be beloved, in the town,--there, caprice and fashion arrange everything, or derange it:--here, there is true liking, and true choice. You will see in the course of the gaieties I give them, how these simple and tender hearts seek each other, without knowing what they are doing.' 'You give me,' replied Elise, 'a picture of the country I little expected; everybody says those sort of people are so much to be pitied.' 'They were so, madame, some years since; but I have found the secret of rendering their condition more happy.' 'Oh! you must tell me your secret!' interrupted Elise, with vivacity. 'I wish also to put it in practice.' 'Nothing can be easier,' replied the count,--'this is what I do: I have about two thousand a year of income; I spend five hundred in Paris, in the two visits that I make there during the year,--five hundred more in my country-house,--and I have a thousand to spare, which I spend on my exchanges.' 'And what exchanges do you make?' 'Well,' said the count, 'I have fields well cultivated, meadows well watered, orchards delicately hedged, and planted with care.' 'Well! what then?' 'Why, Lucas, Blaise, and Nicholas, my neighbours, and my good friends, have pieces of land neglected or worn out; they have no money to cultivate them. I give them a bit of mine instead, acre for acre; and the same space of land which hardly fed them, enriches them in two harvests: the earth which is ungrateful under their hands, becomes fertile in mine. I choose the seed for it, the way of digging, the manure which suits it best, and as soon as it is in good state, I think of another exchange. Those are my amusements.' 'That is charming!' cried Elise; 'you know then the art of agriculture?' 'I learn a little of it, madame; every day, I oppose the theories of the savants to the experience of the peasants. I try to correct what I find wrong in the reasonings of the one, and in the practice of the other.' 'That is an amusing study; but how you ought to be adored then in these cantons! these poor labourers must regard you as their father!' 'On each side, we love each other very much, madame.'"  
This is all very pretty, but falsely romantic, and not to be read at all with the unqualified respect due to the natural truth of the passages I before quoted to you from Marmontel. He wrote this partly in the hope of beguiling foolish and selfish persons to the unheard-of amusement of doing some good to their fellow-creatures; but partly also in really erroneous sentiment, his own character having suffered much deterioration by his compliance with the manners of the Court in the period immediately preceding the French Revolution. Many of the false relations between the rich and poor, which could not but end in such catastrophe, are indicated in the above-quoted passage. There is no recognition of duty on either side: the landlord enjoys himself benevolently, and the labourers receive his benefits in placid gratitude, without being either provoked or instructed to help themselves. Their material condition is assumed to be necessarily wretched unless continually relieved; while their household virtue and honour are represented (truly) as purer than those of their masters. The Revolution could not do away with this fatal anomaly; to this day the French peasant is a better man than his lord; and no government will be possible in France until she has learned that all authority, before it can be honoured, must be honourable.  
But, putting the romantic method of operation aside, the question remains whether Marmontel is right in his main idea that a landlord should rather take 2,000l. in rents, and return 1,000l. in help to his tenants, than remit the 1,000l. of rents at once. To which I reply, that it is primarily better for the State, and ultimately for the tenant, that administrative power should be increased in the landlord's hands; but that it ought not to be by rents which he can change at his own pleasure, but by fixed duties under State law. Of which, in due time;--I do not say in my next letter, for that would be mere defiance of the Third Fors.  
  
Ever faithfully yours,  
JOHN RUSKIN.  
  
  
  
  
NOTES AND CORRESPONDENCE.  
  
Tipton, 8th April, 1872. Sir,--](61591.docx#chunk9866)

[You have written a many letters to workmen, and seem to have suffered from a many replies by clerks, manufacturers, and others, to whom your letters were not addressed; and as you have noticed some of their performances, I am encouraged to expect you will kindly read one written by a man belonging to the class that you have chosen to write to,--one who is emphatically a workman, labouring many hours daily with hands and head in the wilderness known to people living in pleasanter places as the Black Country.  
This letter is not, however, sent to invite you to sympathise with me on account of the sooty residence I endure, for it is not so unpleasant a place to a man with a healthy mind, as gentle-folks with exaggerated sensibilities are apt to consider it. We do see the sky, and sometimes the green fields, and those who always live among the latter don't seem to be more refined, more elevated, or more use in the world than we are. But it is written very respectfully to remonstrate with you on account of your peculiar method of publication. You write books and letters, therefore I suppose you wish them to be read; but did it never occur to you that in order to be read, they must be made known to those whom you desire to read them? and how can that be done unless their publication is advertised? You object to do that, but do not substitute any other method--if, indeed, there is any other--of informing us of the letters and books that you have written. Booksellers do not offer your volumes, because your conditions of sale do not allow them to make a fair profit. Their customers can purchase the books as cheap as the book-dealer, and with as little trouble as an application to him would give them [23]--supposing they have accidentally heard of the books. Like many thousands more in this country of black faces and horny hands, I am imperfectly educated, but desirous to learn, and able, without much self-denial or any inconvenience, to purchase your volumes at a doctor's fee, or two fees each if you fix it so. Some of your books I possess, and the advantages I have received from the study of them makes me desirous that they should be more widely known and read. Commerce is too often a dishonest selfish scramble: employers and employed are at variance when their interests are identical. Daily toil does not obliterate our taste for art, and is it not desirable that those who have the means to gratify that taste should be able to know the right and the wrong in it, and recognise noble art when they see it? Upon all this you have written much in your books, but if the books are not known, it is as if unwritten, of even worse, because it is needful work not doing the good it might do.  
Your 'Fors' series of letters are almost unknown to those to whom you have addressed them. I heard of them six months after their commencement, because some "able editor" was short of copy, and endeavoured to be clever at your expense. Sir, I hope you will reconsider this matter,--what possible harm could it do to simply announce the publication of a volume or a letter in a few newspapers or magazines? It is certainly a mistake that the knowledge of a newly-issued volume should depend upon the exigences of foolish editors or the popular relish for their highly-spiced rubbish.  
I hate anonymous letters, and you can have my address if you want it. I read the other day if any one dared to expostulate with you that you would gibbet him. What that means, I know not. Something awful, no doubt. So I merely subscribe myself,  
  
Sir, Your very humble servant, ------  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
FORS CLAVIGERA.  
LETTER XXII.  
  
Brantwood, 19th September, 1872.  
My Friends,--  
  
I am to-day to begin explaining to you the meaning of my own books, which, some people will tell you, is an egotistical and impertinent thing for an author to do. My own view of the matter is, that it is generally more egotistical and impertinent to explain the meaning of other people's books,--which, nevertheless, at this day in England, many young and inexperienced persons are paid for pretending to do. What intents I have had, myself, therefore, in this 'Fors Clavigera,' and some other lately published writings, I will take on me to tell you, without more preamble.  
And first, for their little vignette stamp of roses on title-page. It is copied from the clearest bit of the pattern of the petticoat of Spring, where it is drawn tight over her thigh, in Sandro Botticelli's picture of her, at Florence. I drew it on the wood myself, and Mr. Burgess cut it; and it is on all my title-pages, because whatever I now write is meant to help in founding the society called of 'Monte Rosa;'--see page sixth of the seventeenth of these letters. Such reference hereafter, observe, is only thus printed, (XVII. 6).  
And I copied this vignette from Sandro Botticelli, for two reasons: first, that no man has ever yet drawn, and none is likely to draw for many a day, roses as well as Sandro has drawn them; secondly, because he was the only painter of Italy who thoroughly felt and understood Dante; and the only one also who understood the thoughts of Heathens and Christians equally, and could in a measure paint both Aphrodite and the Madonna. So that he is, on the whole, the most universal of painters; and, take him all in all, the greatest Florentine workman: and I wish you to know with Dante's opinions, his, also, on all subjects of importance to you, of which Florentines could judge.](61591.docx#chunk9867)

[And of his life, it is proper for you immediately to know thus much: or at least, that so much was current gossip about it in Vasari's time,--that, when he was a boy, he obstinately refused to learn either to read, write, or sum; (and I heartily wish all boys would and could do the same, till they were at least as old as the illiterate Alfred,) whereupon his father, "disturbed by these eccentric habits of his son, turned him over in despair to a gossip of his, called Botticello, who was a goldsmith."  
And on this, note two things: the first, that all the great early Italian masters of painting and sculpture, without exception, began by being goldsmiths' apprentices: the second, that they all felt themselves so indebted to, and formed by the master-craftsman who had mainly disciplined their fingers, whether in work on gold or marble, that they practically considered him their father, and took his name rather than their own; so that most of the great Italian workmen are now known, not by their own names, but by those of their masters, [24] the master being himself often entirely forgotten by the public, and eclipsed by his pupil; but immortal in his pupil, and named in his name. Thus, our Sandro, Alessandro, or Alexander's own name was Filipepi; which name you never heard of, I suppose, till now: nor I, often, but his master's was Botticello; of which master we nevertheless know only that he so formed, and informed, this boy, that thenceforward the boy thought it right to be called "Botticello's Sandro," and nobody else's. Which in Italian is Sandro di Botticello; and that is abbreviated into Sandro Botticelli. So, Francesco Francia is short for Francesco di Francia, or "Francia's Francis," though nobody ever heard, except thus, of his master the goldsmith, Francia. But his own name was Raibolini. So, Philip Brunelleschi is short for Brunellesco's Philip, Brunellesco being his father's Christian name, to show how much he owed to his father's careful training; (the family name was Lippo;) and, which is the prettiest instance of all, "Piero della Francesca," means 'Francesca's Peter;' because he was chiefly trained by his mother, Francesca. All of which I beg you to take to heart, and meditate on, concerning Mastership and Pupilage.  
But to return to Sandro.  
Having learned prosperously how to manage gold, he takes a fancy to know how to manage colour; and is put by his good father under, as it chanced, the best master in Florence, or the world, at that time--the Monk Lippi, whose work is the finest, out and out, that ever monk did; which I attribute, myself, to what is usually considered faultful in him,--his having run away with a pretty novice out of a convent. I am not jesting, I assure you, in the least; but how can I possibly help the nature of things, when that chances to be laughable? Nay, if you think of it, perhaps you will not find it so laughable that Lippi should be the only monk (if this be a fact), who ever did good painter's work.  
Be that as it may, Lippi and his pupil were happy in each other; and the boy soon became a smiter of colour, or colour-smith, no less than a gold-smith; and eventually an "Alexander the Coppersmith," also, not inimical to St. Paul, and for whom Christian people may wish, not revengefully, "the Lord reward him according to his works," though he was fain, Demetrius-like, sometimes to shrine Diana. And he painted, for a beginning, a figure of Fortitude; and then, one of St. Jerome, and then, one of our Lady, and then, one of Pallas, and then, one of Venus with the Graces and Zephyrs, and especially the Spring aforesaid with flowery petticoats; and, finally, the Assumption of our Lady, with the Patriarchs, the Prophets, the Apostles, the Evangelists, the Martyrs, the Confessors, the Doctors, the Virgins, and the Hierarchies. It is to be presumed that by this time he had learned to read, though we hear nothing of it, (rather the contrary, for he is taunted late in life with rude scholarship,)--and then paints under notable circumstances, of which presently, the calling of Moses, and of Aaron, and of Christ,--all well preserved and wonderful pieces, which no person now ever thinks of looking at, though they are the best works of pictorial divinity extant in Europe. And having thus obtained great honour and reputation, and considerable sums of money, he squandered all the last away; and then, returning to Florence, set himself to comment upon and illustrate Dante, engraving some plates for that purpose which I will try to give you a notion of, some day. And at this time, Savonarola beginning to make himself heard, and founding in Florence the company of the Piagnoni, (Mourners, or Grumblers, as opposed to the men of pleasure,) Sandro made a Grumbler of himself, being then some forty years old; and,--his new master being burned in the great square of Florence, a year afterwards (1498),--became a Grumbler to purpose; and doing what he could to show "che cosa e la fede," namely, in engraving Savonarola's "Triumph of Faith," fell sadder, wiser, and poorer, day by day; until he became a poor bedesman of Lorenzo de' Medici; and having gone some time on crutches, being unable to stand upright, and received his due share of what I hope we may call discriminate charity, died peacefully in his fifty-eighth year, having lived a glorious life; and was buried at Florence, in the Church of all Saints, three hundred and fifty-seven years ago.](61591.docx#chunk9868)

[So much for my vignette. For my title, see II. 2, and XIII. 3. I mean it, as you will see by the latter passage, to be read, in English, as "Fortune the Nail-bearer," and that the book itself should show you how to form, or make, this Fortune, see the fifth sentence down the page, in II. 2; and compare III. 2, 3.  
And in the course of the first year's letters, I tried gradually to illustrate to you certain general propositions, which, if I had set them down in form at once, might have seemed to you too startling, or disputable, to be discussed with patience. So I tried to lead you into some discussion of them first, and now hope that you may endure the clearer statement of them, as follows:--  
Proposition I. (I. 3, 4).--The English nation is beginning another group of ten years, empty in purse, empty in stomach, and in a state of terrified hostility to every other nation under the sun.  
I assert this very firmly and seriously. But in the course of these papers every important assertion on the opposite side shall be fairly inserted; so that you may consider of them at your leisure. Here is one, for instance, from the 'Morning Post' of Saturday, August 31, of this year:--"The country is at the present moment in a state of such unexampled prosperity that it is actually suffering from the very superabundance of its riches.... Coals and meat are at famine prices, we are threatened with a strike among the bakers, and there is hardly a single department of industry in which the cost of production has not been enhanced."  
This is exceedingly true; the 'Morning Post' ought to have congratulated you further on the fact that the things produced by this greater cost are now usually good for nothing: Hear on this head, what Mr. Emerson said of us, even so far back as 1856 (and we have made much inferior articles since then). "England is aghast at the disclosure of her fraud in the adulteration of food, of drugs, and of almost every fabric in her mills and shops; finding that milk will not nourish, nor sugar sweeten, nor bread satisfy, nor pepper bite the tongue, nor glue stick. In true England all is false and forged.... It is rare to find a merchant who knows why a crisis occurs in trade,--why prices rise or fall, or who knows the mischief of paper money. [25] In the culmination of National Prosperity, in the annexation of countries; building of ships, depots, towns; in the influx of tons of gold and silver; amid the chuckle of chancellors and financiers, it was found that bread rose to famine prices, that the yeoman was forced to sell his cow and pig, his tools, and his acre of land; and the dreadful barometer of the poor-rates was touching the point of ruin." [26]  
Proposition II. (I. 5).--Of such prosperity I, for one, have seen enough, and will endure it no longer quietly; but will set aside some part of my income to help, if anybody else will join me, in forming a National store instead of a National Debt; and will explain to you as I have time and power, how to avoid such distress in future, by adhering to the elementary principles of Human Economy, which have been of late wilfully entombed under pyramids of falsehood.  
"Wilfully;" note this grave word in my second proposition; and invest a shilling in the purchase of 'Bishop Berkeley on Money,' being extracts from his 'Querist,' by James Harvey, Liverpool. [27] At the bottom of the twenty-first page you will find this query, "Whether the continuous efforts on the part of the 'Times,' the 'Telegraph,' [28] the 'Economist,' the 'Daily News,' and the daily newspaper press, and also of monied men generally, to confound money and capital, be the result of ignorance or design."  
Of ignorance in great part, doubtless, for "monied men, generally," are ignorant enough to believe and assert anything; but it is noticeable that their ignorance always tells on their own side; [29] and the 'Times' and 'Economist' are now nothing more than passive instruments in their hands. But neither they, nor their organs, would long be able to assert untruths in Political Economy, if the nominal professors of the science would do their duty in investigation of it. Of whom I now choose, for direct personal challenge, the Professor at Cambridge; and, being a Doctor of Laws of his own University, and a Fellow of two colleges in mine, I charge him with having insufficiently investigated the principles of the science he is appointed to teach. I charge him with having advanced in defence of the theory of Interest on Money, four arguments, every one of them false, and false with such fallacy as a child ought to have been able to detect. I have exposed one of these fallacies at page 19 of the first letter, and the three others at page 15 to 18 of the eighteenth letter, in this book, and I now publicly call on Professor Fawcett either to defend, or retract, the statements so impugned. And this open challenge cannot be ignored by Professor Fawcett, on the plea that Political Economy is his province, and not mine. If any man holding definite position as a scholar in either University, challenged me publicly and gravely with having falsely defined an elementary principle of Art, I should hold myself bound to answer him, and I think public opinion would ratify my decision.  
Proposition III. (I. 6).--Your redemption from the distress into which you have fallen is in your own hands, and in nowise depends on forms of government or modes of election.](61591.docx#chunk9869)

[But you must make the most of what forms of government you have got, by choosing honest men to work them (if you choose at all), and preparatorily, by honestly obeying them, and in all possible ways, making honest men of yourselves; and if it be indeed, now impossible--as I heard the clergyman declare at Matlock--(IX. 16) for any honest man to live by trade in England, amending the methods of English trade in the necessary particulars, until it becomes possible for honest men to live by it again. In the meantime resolving that you, for your part, will do good work, whether you live by it or die--(II. 21).  
Proposition IV. (I. 10-13).--Of present parliaments and governments you have mainly to enquire what they want with your money when they demand it. And that you may do this intelligently, you are to remember that only a certain quantity of money exists at any given time, and that your first business must be to ascertain the available amount of it, and what it is available for. Because you do not put more money into rich people's hands, when you succeed in putting into rich people's heads that they want something to-day which they had no occasion for yesterday. What they pay you for one thing, they cannot for another; and if they now spend their incomes, they can spend no more. Which you will find they do, and always have done, and can, in fact, neither spend more, nor less--this income being indeed the quantity of food their land produces, by which all art and all manufacture must be supported, and of which no art or manufacture, except such as are directly and wisely employed on the land, can produce a morsel.  
Proposition V. (II. 4).--You had better take care of your squires. Their land, indeed, only belongs to them, or is said to belong, because they seized it long since by force of hand, (compare the quotation from Professor Fawcett at p. xix. of the preface to 'Munera Pulveris,') and you may think you have precisely the same right to seize it now, for yourselves, if you can. So you have,--precisely the same right,--that is to say, none. As they had no right to seize it then, neither have you now. The land, by divine right, can be neither theirs nor yours, except under conditions which you will not ascertain by fighting. In the meantime, by the law of England, the land is theirs; and your first duty as Englishmen is to obey the law of England, be it just or unjust, until it is by due and peaceful deliberation altered, if alteration of it be needful; and to be sure that you are able and willing to obey good laws, before you seek to alter unjust ones (II. 21). For you cannot know whether they are unjust or not until you are just yourselves. Also, your race of squires, considered merely as an animal one, is very precious; and you had better see what use you can make of it, before you let it fall extinct, like the Dodo's. For none other such exists in any part of this round little world; and, once destroyed, it will be long before it develops itself again from Mr. Darwin's germ-cells.  
Proposition VI. (V. 21).--But, if you can, honestly, you had better become minute squires yourselves. The law of England nowise forbids your buying any land which the squires are willing to part with, for such savings as you may have ready. And the main proposal made to you in this book is that you should so economize till you can indeed become diminutive squires, and develope accordingly into some proportionate fineness of race.  
Proposition VII. (II. 5).--But it is perhaps not equally necessary to take care of your capitalists, or so-called 'Employers.' For your real employer is the public; and the so-called employer is only a mediator between the public and you, whose mediation is perhaps more costly than need be, to you both. So that it will be well for you to consider how far, without such intervention, you may succeed in employing yourselves; and my seventh proposition is accordingly that some of you, and all, in some proportion, should be diminutive capitalists, as well as diminutive squires, yet under a novel condition, as follows:--  
Proposition VIII.--Observe, first, that in the ancient and hitherto existent condition of things, the squire is essentially an idle person who has possession of land, and lends it, but does not use it; and the capitalist is essentially an idle person, who has possession of tools, and lends them, but does not use them; while the labourer, by definition, is a laborious person, and by presumption, a penniless one, who is obliged to borrow both land and tools; and paying, for rent on the one, and profit on the other, what will maintain the squire and capitalist, digs finally a remnant of roots, wherewith to maintain himself.](61591.docx#chunk9870)

[These may, in so brief form, sound to you very radical and international definitions. I am glad, therefore, that (though entirely accurate) they are not mine, but Professor Fawcett's. You will find them quoted from his 'Manual of Political Economy' at the eleventh page of my eleventh letter. He does not, indeed, in the passage there quoted, define the capitalist as the possessor of tools, but he does so quite clearly at the end of the fable quoted in I. 18,--"The plane is the symbol of all capital," and the paragraph given in XI. 11, is, indeed, a most faithful statement of the present condition of things, which is, practically, that rich people are paid for being rich, and idle people are paid for being idle, and busy people taxed for being busy. Which does not appear to me a state of matters much longer tenable; but rather, and this is my 8th Proposition (XI. 13), that land should belong to those who can use it, and tools to those who can use them; or, as a less revolutionary, and instantly practicable, proposal, that those who have land and tools--should use them.  
Proposition IX. and last:--To know the "use" either of land or tools, you must know what useful things can be grown from the one, and made with the other. And therefore to know what is useful, and what useless, and be skilful to provide the one, and wise to scorn the other, is the first need for all industrious men. Wherefore, I propose that schools should be established, wherein the use of land and tools shall be taught conclusively:--in other words, the sciences of agriculture (with associated river and sea-culture); and the noble arts and exercises of humanity.  
Now you cannot but see how impossible it would have been for me, in beginning these letters, to have started with a formal announcement of these their proposed contents, even now startling enough, probably, to some of my readers, after nearly two years' preparatory talk. You must see also how in speaking of so wide a subject, it is not possible to complete the conversation respecting each part of it at once, and set that aside; but it is necessary to touch on each head by little and little. Yet in the course of desultory talk, I have been endeavouring to exhibit to you, essentially, these six following things, namely,--A, the general character and use of squires; B, the general character and mischievousness of capitalists; C, the nature of money; D, the nature of useful things; E, the methods of finance which obtain money; and F, the methods of work which obtain useful things.  
To these "six points" I have indeed directed my own thoughts, and endeavoured to direct yours, perseveringly, throughout these letters, though to each point as the Third Fors might dictate; that is to say, as light was thrown upon it in my mind by what might be publicly taking place at the time, or by any incident happening to me personally. Only it chanced that in the course of the first year, 1871, one thing which publicly took place, namely the siege and burning of Paris, was of interest so unexpected that it necessarily broke up what little consistency of plan I had formed, besides putting me into a humour in which I could only write incoherently; deep domestic vexation occurring to me at the same time, till I fell ill, and my letters and vexations had like to have ended together. So I must now patch the torn web as best I can, by giving you reference to what bears on each of the above six heads in the detached talk of these twenty months, (and I hope also a serviceable index at the two years' end); and, if the work goes on,--But I had better keep all Ifs out of it.  
Meantime, with respect to point A, the general character and use of squires, you will find the meaning of the word 'Squire' given in II. 4, as being threefold, like that of Fors. First, it means a rider; or in more full and perfect sense, a master or governor of beasts; signifying that a squire has fine sympathy with all beasts of the field, and understanding of their natures complete enough to enable him to govern them for their good, and be king over all creatures, subduing the noxious ones, and cherishing the virtuous ones. Which is the primal meaning of chivalry, the horse, as the noblest, because trainablest, of wild creatures, being taken for a type of them all. Read on this point, IX. 11-13, and if you can see my larger books, at your library, SS 205 of 'Aratra Pentelici;' and the last lecture in 'Eagle's Nest.' [30] And observe farther that it follows from what is noted in those places, that to be a good squire, one must have the instincts of animals as well as those of men; but that the typical squire is apt to err somewhat on the lower side, and occasionally to have the instincts of animals instead of those of men.](61591.docx#chunk9871)

[Secondly. The word 'Squire' means a Shield-bearer;--properly, the bearer of some superior person's shield; but at all events, the declarer, by legend, of good deserving and good intention, either others' or his own; with accompanying statement of his resolution to defend and maintain the same; and that so persistently that, rather than lose his shield, he is to make it his death-bed: and so honourably and without thought of vulgar gain, that it is the last blame of base governments to become 'shield-sellers;' (compare 'Munera Pulveris,' SS 127). On this part of the Squire's character I have not yet been able to insist at any length; but you will find partial suggestion of the manner in which you may thus become yourselves shield-bearers, in 'Time and Tide,' SSSS 72, 73, and I shall soon have the elementary copies in my Oxford schools published, and you may then learn, if you will, somewhat of shield-drawing and painting.  
And thirdly, the word 'Squire' means a Carver, properly a carver at some one else's feast; and typically, has reference to the Squire's duty as a Carver at all men's feasts, being Lord of Land, and therefore giver of Food; in which function his lady, as you have heard now often enough, (first from Carlyle,) is properly styled Loaf-giver; her duty being, however, first of all to find out where all loaves come from; for, quite retaining his character in the other two respects, the typical squire is apt to fail in this, and to become rather a loaf-eater, or consumer, than giver, (compare X. 4, and X. 16); though even in that capacity the enlightened press of your day thinks you cannot do without him. (VII. 17.) Therefore, for analysis of what he has been, and may be, I have already specified to you certain squires, whose history I wish you to know and think over; (with many others in due course; but, for the present, those already specified are enough,) namely, the Theseus of the Elgin Marbles and Midsummer Night's Dream, (II. 3); the best and unfortunatest [31] of the Kings of France, 'St. Louis' (III. 8); the best and unfortunatest of the Kings of England, Henry II. (III. 9); the Lion-heart of England (III. 11); Edward III. of England and his lion's whelp, (IV. 14); again and again the two Second Friedrichs, of Germany and Prussia; Sir John Hawkwood, (I. 6, and XV. 11); Sir Thomas More, (VII. 4); Sir Francis Drake, (XIII. 11); and Sir Richard Grenville, (IX. 11). Now all these squires are alike in their high quality of captainship over man and beast; they were pre-eminently the best men of their surrounding groups of men; and the guides of their people, faithfully recognized for such; unless when their people got drunk, (which sometimes happened, with sorrowful issue,) and all equality with them seen to be divinely impossible. (Compare XIV. 7.) And that most of them lived by thieving does not, under the conditions of their day, in any wise detract from their virtue, or impair their delightfulness, (any more than it does that of your, on the whole I suppose, favourite, Englishman, and nomadic Squire of Sherwood, Robin Hode or Hood); the theft, or piracy, as it might happen, being always effected with a good conscience, and in an open, honourable, and merciful manner. Thus, in the account of Sir Francis's third voyage, which was faithfully taken out of the reports of Mr. Christofer Ceely, Ellis Hixon, and others who were in the same voyage with him, by Philip Nichols, preacher, revised and annotated by Sir Francis himself, and set forth by his nephew, what I told you about his proceedings on the coast of Spanish America (XIII. 12) is thus summed:--  
  
"There were at this time belonging to Carthagene, Nombre de Dios, Rio Grand, Santa Martha, Rio de Hacha, Venta Cruz, Veragua, Nicaragua, the Honduras, Jamaica, &c., about two hundred frigates, [32] some of a hundred and twenty tunnes, other but of tenne or twelve tunne, but the most of thirty or forty tunne, which all had entercourse betweene Carthagene and Nombre de Dios, the most of which, during our abode in those parts, wee tooke, and some of them twice or thrice each, yet never burnt nor suncke any, unless they were made out men-of-warre against us.... Many strange birds, beastes, and fishes, besides, fruits, trees, plants and the like were seene and observed of us in this journey, which, willingly, wee pretermit, as hastening to the end of our voyage, which from this Cape of St. Anthony wee intended to finish by sayling the directest and speediest way homeward, and accordingly even beyonde our owne expectation most happily performed. For whereas our captaine had purposed to touch at New-found-land, and there to have watered, which would have been some let unto us, though wee stood in great want of water, yet God Almighty so provided for us, by giving us good store of raine water, that wee were sufficiently furnished; and within twenty-three dayes wee past from the Cape of Florida to the Iles of Silley, and so arrived at Plimouth on Sunday, about sermon-time, August the Ninth, 1573, at what time the newes of our captaine's returne brought unto his" (people?) "did so speedily pass over all the church, and surpass their mindes with desire and delight to see him, that very fewe or none remained with the preacher, all hastening to see the evidence of God's love and blessing towards our gracious Queene and countrey, by the fruite of our captaine's labour and successe. Soli Deo gloria."  
  
I am curious to know, and hope to find, that the deserted preacher was Mr. Philip Nichols, the compiler afterwards of this log-book of Sir Francis.](61591.docx#chunk9872)

[Putting out of the question, then, this mode of their livelihood, you will find all these squires essentially "captaines," head, or chief persons, occupied in maintaining good order, and putting things to rights, so that they naturally become chief Lawyers without Wigs, (otherwise called Kings,) in the districts accessible to them. Of whom I have named first, the Athenian Theseus, "setter to rights," or "settler," his name means; he being both the founder of the first city whose history you are to know, and the first true Ruler of beasts: for his mystic contest with the Minotaur is the fable through which the Greeks taught what they knew of the more terrible and mysterious relations between the lower creatures and man; and the desertion of him by Ariadne, (for indeed he never deserted her, but she him,--involuntarily, poor sweet maid,--Death calling her in Diana's name,) is the conclusive stroke against him by the Third Fors.  
Of this great squire, then, you shall really have some account in next letter. I have only further time now to tell you that this month's frontispiece is a facsimile of two separate parts of an engraving originally executed by Sandro Botticelli. An impression of Sandro's own plate is said to exist in the Vatican; I have never seen one. The ordinarily extant impressions are assuredly from an inferior plate, a copy of Botticelli's. But his manner of engraving has been imitated by the copyist as far as he understood it, and the important qualities of the design are so entirely preserved that the work has often been assigned to the master himself.  
It represents the seven works of Mercy, as completed by an eighth work in the centre of all; namely, lending without interest, from the Mount of Pity accumulated by generous alms. In the upper part of the design are seen the shores of Italy, with the cities which first built Mounts of Pity: Venice, chief of all;--then Florence, Genoa, and Castruccio's Lucca; in the distance prays the monk of Ancona, who first thought--inspired of heaven--of such war with usurers; and an angel crowns him, as you see. The little dashes, which form the dark background, represent waves of the Adriatic; and they, as well as all the rest, are rightly and manfully engraved, though you may not think it; but I have no time to-day to give you a lecture on engraving, nor to tell you the story of Mounts of Pity, which is too pretty to be spoiled by haste; but I hope to get something of Theseus and Frederick the Second, preparatorily, into next letter. Meantime I must close this one by answering two requests, which, though made to me privately, I think it right to state my reasons for refusing, publicly.  
The first was indeed rather the offer of an honour to me, than a request, in the proposal that I should contribute to the Maurice Memorial Fund.  
I loved Mr. Maurice, learned much from him, worked under his guidance and authority, and have deep regard and respect for some persons whose names I see on the Memorial Committee.  
But I must decline joining them: first, because I dislike all memorials, as such; thinking that no man who deserves them, needs them: and secondly, because, though I affectionately remember and honour Mr. Maurice, I have no mind to put his bust in Westminster Abbey. For I do not think of him as one of the great, or even one of the leading, men of the England of his day; but only as the centre of a group of students whom his amiable sentimentalism at once exalted and stimulated, while it relieved them from any painful necessities of exact scholarship in divinity. And as he was always honest, (at least in intention,) and unfailingly earnest and kind, he was harmless and soothing in error, and vividly helpful when unerring. I have above referred you, and most thankfully, to his sermon on the relations of man to inferior creatures; and I can quite understand how pleasant it was for a disciple panic-struck by the literal aspect of the doctrine of justification by faith, to be told, in an earlier discourse, that "We speak of an anticipation as justified by the event. Supposing that anticipation to be something so inward, so essential to me, that my own very existence is involved in it, I am justified by it." But consolatory equivocations of this kind have no enduring place in literature; nor has Mr. Maurice more real right to a niche in Westminster Abbey than any other tender-hearted Christian gentleman, who has successfully, for a time, promoted the charities of his faith, and parried its discussion.  
I have been also asked to contribute to the purchase of the Alexandra Park; and I will not: and beg you, my working readers, to understand, once for all, that I wish your homes to be comfortable, and refined; and that I will resist, to the utmost of my power, all schemes founded on the vile modern notion that you are to be crowded in kennels till you are nearly dead, that other people may make money by your work, and then taken out in squads by tramway and railway, to be revived and refined by science and art. Your first business is to make your homes healthy and delightful: then, keep your wives and children there, and let your return to them be your daily "holy day."  
  
Ever faithfully yours,  
JOHN RUSKIN.  
  
  
  
  
NOTES AND CORRESPONDENCE.  
  
The subjoined letter is from a clergyman of the Church of England; I publish it with his permission, advising him at the same time to withhold his name, as the arguments he has brought forward are those which would generally occur to a mind ecclesiastically trained:--  
  
10th September, 1872.](61591.docx#chunk9873)

[Sir,--At page 15 of the 21st letter of your 'Fors Clavigera' you tell the working men and labourers of this country that "lending for gain is sinful;" and you intimate, as I gather, that this is the teaching of the Bible. May I, therefore, be allowed to submit that this unqualified assertion, with its world-wide consequences, is not true?  
In Deut. xxiii. 20, you will find these words: "Unto a stranger thou mayest lend upon usury." And the margin (a), for the scope and meaning of this word "stranger," refers you to Deut. x. 19, which says, "Love ye therefore the stranger." And the margin (b) refers us also to Lev. xix. 35, which enjoins us to "love the stranger" as ourselves.  
So that we are thus plainly taught--  
I. That the lending upon usury cannot be in itself a sin, or God (c) could not have allowed it in any case whatsoever, any more than He could have allowed theft or lying (d).  
II. That the lending to the stranger was not incompatible with the command, "Love ye the stranger," or else God, in the laws and writings given by Moses, at one and the same time, stultifies and contradicts Himself (e).  
III. That the laws forbidding usury, like the laws for preserving estates to their families by the year of Jubilee, and like the laws which bound Israelitish servants until the "year of release," were peculiar and exclusive, and concerned only that people living in a peculiar and exclusive way. Outside that little patch of territory, but the size of our two largest English counties, the Jews were expressly told they might lend upon usury; and this at the same time that they were enjoined to love the stranger, and not to "oppress the stranger (f)."  
Says old 'Cruden's Concordance:'--"It seems as lawful for me to receive interest for money, which another takes pain with, improves, but runs the hazard of in trade, as it is to receive rent for my land, which another takes pain with, improves, but runs the hazard of in husbandry." What should we think of discovering in the holy books of some recently found people, a God so eccentric that he allowed you to invest money in tea, or sugar, or iron, or cotton, and get fifteen or even twenty per cent. out of it, and this from poor and rich alike, with whom you traded; but threatened you with his condemnation and everlasting displeasure if, at the same time, you helped a deserving man to commence business by lending him money at four per cent.; or lent money to your country until such time as it could pay its debts, for a moderate compensation, which would prevent you and yours from being ruined? (g) Love of self is as lawful as love of neighbour--"Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." My neighbour is as much bound to give me some portion of the interest or gain he has earned with my money, as he would be chargeable with selfishness and grasping if he kept it wholly for himself. Trading much more whets the appetite for gain than the taking moderate interest for money. Would our Lord have held up that which was wicked in itself for our imitation, as He has done in Matt. xxv. 27, if lending upon interest were sinful? (h) Nothing but this sight of the taking portion of the Bible without the other, and then summing up and pronouncing judgment upon a portion of the evidence only, thus arriving at an unsound judgment, would have led me to trouble you with these lines.  
  
I remain, Sir, Yours faithfully.  
  
(a), (b), and (c). My correspondent uses "God" and "the margin" as synonymous terms. May I be allowed to submit to him that they are not the same, and that my statement involved no reference to either? My assertion is respecting the Bible; and has no reference either to its margin, or to God:--and my assertion is simply that "usury," in the language of the Bible, means any percentage, however small, on lent money. I have made no assertion myself as to the characters assigned to it, for I have not examined them. I know that usury is sinful, as I know that theft is, and have no need of inquiring whether the Bible says so or not, but Ezekiel 18th is sufficiently explicit.  
(d). Why does not my correspondent say "theft, lying, or murder"? The occupation of the land of Canaan was one colossal theft; the prophetess-Judge of Israel gave enthusiastic benediction, in one and the same person, to the firmness of the hand of the murderess, and fineness of the art of the liar; and the first monarch of Israel forfeited his throne, because after having faithfully slain the men, women, children, sucklings, and domestic animals of a hostile tribe, he faithlessly spared their king, and serviceablest cattle.  
(e). The writings commonly assumed to be given by Moses very certainly contradict themselves in many places. It is my correspondent's conclusion, not mine, that therefore God does so.  
(f). The Jews have accordingly carried out their love to the stranger, (though I beg my correspondent to observe that stranger is not the same word as Gentile) by making as much money out of him as they can, in all places and on all occasions. But it does not follow, either that they have been blessed in doing so, or that Christians are therefore justified in treating each other either as strangers or Jews.  
(g). A singular instance of the looseness of thought possible respecting matters to which we are accustomed. A man is not ruined, because he can get no gain by lending his money. No one objects to his keeping it in his pocket.  
(h). Presumably, the unjust steward's modification of his master's accounts was also virtuous?](61591.docx#chunk9874)

[I have not time to ask Mr. Sillar's permission, but hope his pardon for assuming it, to print the following portion of a letter I have had very great pleasure in receiving from him:--  
  
"You wrong me in saying I have entirely given myself up to this question. I am occupied in saving our lovely streams from pollution, and endeavouring (no easy task, I assure you,) to put in daily practice, the principles you teach. I wish you could see our works at Crossness.  
"The reason why I exclusively attack this vice is because it is the only one which is not attacked from the pulpit. Men do not know even that it is a vice. I have such confidence in the integrity of Englishmen that I believe they would at once discountenance it if they had the least idea of its character and mischievous nature."  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
FORS CLAVIGERA.  
LETTER XXIII.  
  
Brantwood, October 24th, 1872.  
My Friends,  
  
At breakfast this morning, which I was eating sulkily, because I had final press-corrections to do on 'Fors,' (and the last are always worst to do, being without repentance,) I took up the 'Pall Mall Gazette' for the 21st, and chanced on two things, of which one much interested, the other much pleased me, and both are to our present purpose.  
What interested me was the statement in the column of "This Evening's News," made by a gentleman much acquainted with naval business, that "Mr. Goschen is the one man to whom, and to whom alone, we can as a nation look even for permission to retain our power at sea."  
Whether entirely, or, as I apprehend, but partially, true, this statement is a remarkable one to appear in the journals of a nation which has occupied its mind lately chiefly on the subject of its liberties; and I cannot but wonder what Sir Francis Drake would have thought of such a piece of Evening's News, communicated in form to him!  
What he would have thought--if you can fancy it--would be very proper for you also to think, and much to our eventual purpose. But the part of the contents of the 'Pall Mall' which I found to bear on the subject of this letter, was the address by a mangled convict to a benevolent gentleman. The Third Fors must assuredly have determined that this letter should be pleasing to the Touchstone mind,--the gods will have it poetical; it ends already with rhyme, and must begin in like manner, for these first twelve verses of the address are much too precious to be lost among "news," whether of morning or evening.  
  
"Mr. P. Taylor, honnered Sir, Accept these verses I indict, Thanks to a gentle mother dear Whitch taught these infant hands to rite.  
"And thanks unto the Chaplin here, A heminent relidjous man, As kind a one as ever dipt A beke into the flowing can.  
"He pointes out to me most clear How sad and sinfull is my ways, And numerous is the briney tear Which for that man I nigtly prays.  
"'Cohen,' he ses, in sech a voice! 'Your lot is hard, your stripes is sore; But Cohen,' he ses, 'rejoice! rejoice! And never never steale no more!'  
"His langwidge is so kind and good, It works so strong on me inside, I woold not do it if I could, I coold not do it if I tryed.  
"Ah, wence this moisteur in my eye? Whot make me turn agin my food? O, Mister Taylor, arsk not why, Ime so cut up with gratitood.  
"Fansy a gentleman like you, No paultry Beak, but a M.P., A riggling in your heasy chair The riggles they put onto me.  
"I see thee shudderin ore thy wine,-- You hardly know what you are at, Whenere you think of Us emplyin The bloody and unhenglish Cat.  
"Well may your indigernation rise! I call it Manley what you feeled At seein Briton's n-k-d b-cks By brutial jalors acked and weald.  
"Habolish these yere torchiers! Dont have no horgies any more Of arf a dozen orficers All wallerin in a fellers goar.  
"Inprisonment alone is not A thing of whitch we would complane; Add ill-conwenience to our lot, But do not give the convick pain.  
"And well you know that's not the wust, Not if you went and biled us whole; The Lash's degeradation!--that's What cuts us to the wery soul!"  
  
The questions respecting punishment and reformation, which these verses incidentally propose, are precisely the same which had to be determined three thousand years ago in the city of Athens--(the only difference of any importance being that the instrument of execution discussed was club instead of cat); and their determination gave rise to the peculiar form in which the history of the great Athenian Squire, Theseus,--our to-day's subject--was presented to mankind.  
The story is a difficult one to tell, and a more difficult one still to understand. The likeness, or imagined likeness, of the hero himself, as the Greeks fancied him, you may see, when you care to do so, at the British Museum, in simple guise enough.](61591.docx#chunk9875)

[Miss Edgeworth, in her noble last novel, 'Helen,' makes her hero fly into a passion at even being suspected of wishing to quote the too trite proverb that "No man is a hero to his valet-de-chambre." But Mr. Beauclerk disclaims it for its triteness only, when he ought rather to have disclaimed it for its untruth. Every truly great man that ever I heard of, was a principal hero to his servants, and most heroic to those most intimate with him. At all events, the Greeks meant all the world to be to their hero as valets-de-chambre, for he sits mother-naked. Under which primitive aspect, indeed, I would fain show you, mentally as well as bodily, every hero I give you account of. It is the modern method, in order to give you more inviting pictures of people, to dress them--often very correctly--in the costume of the time, with such old clothes as the masquerade shops keep. But my own steady aim is to strip them for you, that you may see if they are of flesh, indeed, or dust. Similarly, I shall try to strip theories bare, and facts, such as you need to know.  
Mother-naked sits Theseus: and round about him, not much more veiled, ride his Athenians, in Pan-Athenaic procession, honouring their Queen-Goddess. Admired, beyond all other marble shapes in the world; for which reason, the gentlemen of my literary club here in London, professing devotion to the same goddess, decorate their very comfortable corner house in Pall Mall with a copy of this Attic sculpture.  
Being therein, themselves, Attic in no wise, but essentially barbarous, pilfering what they cannot imitate: for a truly Attic mind would have induced them to pourtray themselves, as they appear in their own Pan-Christian procession, whenever and wherever it may be:--presumably, to Epsom downs on the Derby day.  
You may see, I said, the statue of Theseus whenever you care to do so. I do not in the least know why you should care. But for years back, you, or your foolish friends, have been making a mighty fuss to get yourselves into the British Museum on Sundays: so I suppose you want to see the Theseus, or the stuffed birds, or the crabs and spiders, or the skeleton of the gorilla, or the parched alligator-skins; and you imagine these contemplations likely to improve, and sanctify, that is to say, recreate, your minds.  
But are you quite sure you have got any minds yet to be recreated? Before you expect edification from that long gallery full of long-legged inconceivable spiders, and colossal blotchy crabs, did you ever think of looking with any mind, or mindfulness, at the only too easily conceivable short-legged spider of your own English acquaintance? or did you ever so much as consider why the crabs on Margate sands were minded to go sideways instead of straightforward? Have you so much as watched a spider making his cobweb, or, if you have not yet had leisure to do that, in the toil of your own cobweb-making, did you ever think how he threw his first thread across the corner?  
No need for you to go to the British Museum yet, my friends, either on Sundays or any other day.  
"Well, but the Greek sculpture? We can't see that at home in our room corners."  
And what is Greek sculpture, or any sculpture, to you? Are your own legs and arms not handsome enough for you to look at, but you must go and stare at chipped and smashed bits of stone in the likenesses of legs and arms that ended their walks and work two thousand years ago?  
"Your own legs and arms are not as handsome as--you suppose they ought to be," say you?  
No; I fancy not: and you will not make them handsomer by sauntering with your hands in your pockets through the British Museum. I suppose you will have an agitation, next, for leave to smoke in it. Go and walk in the fields on Sunday, making sure, first, therefore, that you have fields to walk in: look at living birds, not at stuffed ones; and make your own breasts and shoulders better worth seeing than the Elgin Marbles.  
Which to effect, remember, there are several matters to be thought of. The shoulders will get strong by exercise. So indeed will the breast. But the breast chiefly needs exercise inside of it--of the lungs, namely, and of the heart; and this last exercise is very curiously inconsistent with many of the athletic exercises of the present day. And the reason I do want you, for once, to go to the British Museum, and to look at that broad chest of Theseus, is that the Greeks imagined it to have something better than a Lion's Heart beneath its breadth--a hero's heart, duly trained in every pulse.  
They imagined it so. Your modern extremely wise and liberal historians will tell you it never was so:--that no real Theseus ever existed then; and that none can exist now, or, rather, that everybody is himself a Theseus and a little more.  
All the more strange then, all the more instructive, as the disembodied Cincinnatus of the Roman, so this disembodied Theseus of the Ionian; though certainly Mr. Stuart Mill could not consider him, even in that ponderous block of marble imagery, a "utility fixed and embodied in a material object." Not even a disembodied utility--not even a ghost--if he never lived. An idea only; yet one that has ruled all minds of men to this hour, from the hour of its first being born, a dream, into this practical and solid world.  
Ruled, and still rules, in a thousand ways, which you know no more than the paths by which the winds have come that blow in your face. But you never pass a day without being brought, somehow, under the power of Theseus.](61591.docx#chunk9876)

[You cannot pass a china-shop, for instance, nor an upholsterer's, without seeing, on some mug or plate, or curtain, or chair, the pattern known as the "Greek fret," simple or complex. I once held it in especial dislike, as the chief means by which bad architects tried to make their buildings look classical; and as ugly in itself. Which it is: and it has an ugly meaning also; but a deep one, which I did not then know; having been obliged to write too young, when I knew only half truths, and was eager to set them forth by what I thought fine words. People used to call me a good writer then; now they say I can't write at all; because, for instance, if I think anybody's house is on fire, I only say, "Sir, your house is on fire;" whereas formerly I used to say, "Sir, the abode in which you probably passed the delightful days of youth is in a state of inflammation," and everybody used to like the effect of the two p's in "probably passed," and of the two d's in "delightful days."  
Well, that Greek fret, ugly in itself, has yet definite and noble service in decorative work, as black has among colours; much more, has it a significance, very precious, though very solemn, when you can read it.  
There is so much in it, indeed, that I don't well know where to begin. Perhaps it will be best to go back to our cathedral door at Lucca, where we have been already. For as, after examining the sculpture on the bell, with the help of the sympathetic ringer, I was going in to look at the golden lamp, my eyes fell on a slightly traced piece of sculpture and legend on the southern wall of the porch, which, partly feeling it out with my finger, it being worn away by the friction of many passing shoulders, broad and narrow, these six hundred years and more, I drew for you, and Mr. Burgess has engraved.  
The straggling letters at the side, read straight, and with separating of the words, run thus:--  
  
HIC QVEM CRETICVS EDIT DEDALVS EST LABERINTHVS. DE QVO NVLLVS VADERE QVIVIT QVI FVIT INTVS NI THESEVS GRATIS ADRIANE STAMINE JVTVS.  
  
which is in English:--  
  
This is the labyrinth which the Cretan Dedalus built, Out of which nobody could get who was inside, Except Theseus; nor could he have done it, unless he had been helped with a thread by Adriane, all for love.  
  
Upon which you are to note, first, that the grave announcement, "This is the labyrinth which the Cretan Dedalus built," may possibly be made interesting even to some of your children, if reduced from mediaeval sublimity, into your more popular legend--"This is the house that Jack built." The cow with the crumpled horn will then remind them of the creature who, in the midst of this labyrinth, lived as a spider in the centre of his web; and the "maiden all forlorn" may stand for Ariadne, or Adriane--(either name is given her by Chaucer, as he chooses to have three syllables or two)--while the gradual involution of the ballad, and necessity of clear-mindedness as well as clear utterance on the part of its singer, is a pretty vocal imitation of the deepening labyrinth. Theseus, being a pious hero, and the first Athenian knight who cut his hair short in front, may not inaptly be represented by the priest all shaven and shorn; the cock that crew in the morn is the proper Athenian symbol of a pugnacious mind; and the malt that lay in the house fortunately indicates the connection of Theseus and the Athenian power with the mysteries of Eleusis, where corn first, it is said, grew in Greece. And by the way, I am more and more struck every day, by the singular Grecism in Shakespeare's mind, contrary in many respects to the rest of his nature; yet compelling him to associate English fairyland with the great Duke of Athens, and to use the most familiar of all English words for land, "acre," in the Greek or Eleusinian sense, not the English one!  
  
"Between the acres of the rye, These pretty country-folks do lie--"  
  
and again--"search every acre in the high grown field," meaning "ridge," or "crest," not "ager," the root of "agriculture." Lastly, in our nursery rhyme, observe that the name of Jack, the builder, stands excellently for Daedalus, retaining the idea of him down to the phrase, "Jack-of-all-Trades." Of this Greek builder you will find some account at the end of my 'Aratra Pentelici:' to-day I can only tell you he is distinctively the power of finest human, as opposed to Divine, workmanship or craftsmanship. Whatever good there is, and whatever evil, in the labour of the hands, separated from that of the soul, is exemplified by his history and performance. In the deepest sense, he was to the Greeks, Jack of all trades, yet Master of none; the real Master of every trade being always a God. His own special work or craft was inlaying or dove-tailing, and especially of black in white.  
And this house which he built was his finest piece of involution, or cunning workmanship; and the memory of it is kept by the Greeks for ever afterwards, in that running border of theirs, involved in and repeating itself, called the Greek fret, of which you will at once recognise the character in these two pictures of the labyrinth of Daedalus itself, on the coins of the place where it was built, Cnossus, in the island of Crete; and which you see, in the frontispiece, surrounding the head of Theseus, himself, on a coin of the same city.](61591.docx#chunk9877)

[Of course frets and returning lines were used in ornamentation when there were no labyrinths--probably long before labyrinths. A symbol is scarcely ever invented just when it is needed. Some already recognised and accepted form or thing becomes symbolic at a particular time. Horses had tails, and the moon quarters, long before there were Turks; but the horse-tail and crescent are not less definitely symbolic to the Ottoman. So, the early forms of ornament are nearly alike, among all nations of any capacity for design: they put meaning into them afterwards, if they ever come themselves to have any meaning. Vibrate but the point of a tool against an unbaked vase, as it revolves, set on the wheel,--you have a wavy or zigzag line. The vase revolves once; the ends of the wavy line do not exactly tally when they meet; you get over the blunder by turning one into a head, the other into a tail,--and have a symbol of eternity--if, first, which is wholly needful, you have an idea of eternity!  
Again, the free sweep of a pen at the finish of a large letter has a tendency to throw itself into a spiral. There is no particular intelligence, or spiritual emotion, in the production of this line. A worm draws it with his coil, a fern with its bud, and a periwinkle with his shell. Yet, completed in the Ionic capital, and arrested in the bending point of the acanthus leaf in the Corinthian one, it has become the primal element of beautiful architecture and ornament in all the ages; and is eloquent with endless symbolism, representing the power of the winds and waves in Athenian work, and of the old serpent, which is the Devil and Satan, in Gothic work: or, indeed, often enough, of both, the Devil being held prince of the power of the air--as in the story of Job, and the lovely story of Buonconte of Montefeltro, in Dante: nay, in this very tale of Theseus, as Chaucer tells it,--having got hold, by ill luck, only of the later and calumnious notion that Theseus deserted his saviour-mistress, he wishes him Devil-speed instead of God-speed, and that energetically--  
  
"A twenty-divel way the wind him drive."  
  
For which, indeed, Chaucer somewhat deserved (for he ought not to have believed such things of Theseus,) the God of Love's anger at his drawing too near the daisy. I will write the pretty lines partly in modern spelling for you, that you may get the sense better:--  
  
I, kneeling by this flower, in good intent, Abode, to know what all the people meant, As still as any stone; till at the last The God of Love on me his eyen cast And said, "Who kneeleth there?" And I answered Unto his asking, And said, "Sir, it am I," and came him near And salued him.--Quoth he, "What dost thou here So nigh mine own flower, so boldly? It were better worthy, truly, A worm to nighen near my flower than thou." "And why, Sir," quoth I, "an it like you?" "For thou," quoth he, "art nothing thereto able, It is my relike, digne, and delitable. And thou my foe, and all my folk worriest. [33] And of mine old servants thou missayest."  
  
But it is only for evil speaking of ladies that Chaucer felt his conscience thus pricked,--chiefly of Cressida; whereas, I have written the lines for you because it is the very curse of this age that we speak evil alike of ladies and knights, and all that made them noble in past days;--nay, of saints also; and I have, for first business, next January, to say what I can for our own St. George, against the enlightened modern American view of him, that he was nothing better than a swindling bacon-seller (good enough, indeed, so, for us, now!)  
But to come back to the house that Jack built. You will want to know, next, whether Jack ever did build it. I believe, in veritable bricks and mortar--no; in veritable limestone and cave-catacomb, perhaps, yes; it is no matter how; somehow, you see, Jack must have built it, for there is the picture of it on the coin of the town. He built it, just as St. George killed the dragon; so that you put a picture of him also on the coin of your town.  
Not but that the real and artful labyrinth might have been, for all we know. A very real one, indeed, was built by twelve brotherly kings in Egypt, in two stories, one for men to live in, the other for crocodiles;--and the upper story was visible and wonderful to all eyes, in authentic times: whereas, we know of no one who ever saw Jack's labyrinth: and yet, curiously enough, the real labyrinth set the pattern of nothing; while Jack's ghostly labyrinth has set the pattern of almost everything linear and complex, since; and the pretty spectre of it blooms at this hour, in vital hawthorn for you, every spring, at Hampton Court.](61591.docx#chunk9878)

[Now, in the pictures of this imaginary maze, you are to note that both the Cretan and Lucchese designs agree in being composed of a single path or track, coiled, and recoiled, on itself. Take a piece of flexible chain and lay it down, considering the chain itself as the path: and, without an interruption, it will trace any of the three figures. (The two Cretan ones are indeed the same in design, except in being, one square, and the other round.) And recollect, upon this, that the word "Labyrinth" properly means "rope-walk," or "coil-of-rope-walk," its first syllable being probably also the same as our English name "Laura," 'the path,' and its method perfectly given by Chaucer in the single line--"And, for the house is crenkled to and fro." And on this, note farther, first, that had the walls been real, instead of ghostly, there would have been no difficulty whatever in getting either out or in, for you could go no other way. But if the walls were spectral, and yet the transgression of them made your final entrance or return impossible, Ariadne's clue was needful indeed.  
Note, secondly, that the question seems not at all to have been about getting in; but getting out again. The clue, at all events, could be helpful only after you had carried it in; and if the spider, or other monster in midweb, ate you, the help in your clue, for return, would be insignificant. So that this thread of Ariadne's implied that even victory over the monster would be vain, unless you could disentangle yourself from his web also.  
So much you may gather from coin or carving: next, we try tradition. Theseus, as I said before, is the great settler or law-giver of the Athenian state; but he is so eminently as the Peace-maker, causing men to live in fellowship who before lived separate, and making roads passable that were infested by robbers or wild beasts. He is the exterminator of every bestial and savage element, and the type of human, or humane power, which power you will find in this, and all my other books on policy, summed in the terms, "Gentleness and Justice." The Greeks dwelt chiefly in their thoughts on the last, and Theseus, representing the first, has therefore most difficulty in dealing with questions of punishment, and criminal justice.  
Now the justice of the Greeks was enforced by three great judges, who lived in three islands. AEacus, who lived in the island of AEgina, is the administrator of distributive, or 'dividing' justice; which relates chiefly to property, and his subjects, as being people of industrious temper, were once ants; afterwards called Ant-people, or 'Myrmidons.'  
Secondly, Minos, who lived in the island of Crete, was the judge who punished crime, of whom presently; finally, Rhadamanthus, called always by Homer "golden," or "glowing" Rhadamanthus, was the judge who rewarded virtue; and he lived in a blessed island covered with flowers, but which eye of man hath not yet seen, nor has any living ear heard lisp of wave on that shore.  
For the very essence and primal condition of virtue is that it shall not know of, nor believe in, any blessed islands, till it find them, it may be, in due time.  
And of these three judges, two were architects, but the third only a gardener. AEacus helped the gods to build the walls of Troy. Minos appointed the labyrinth in coils round the Minotaur; but Rhadamanthus only set trees, with golden fruit on them, beside waters of comfort, and overlaid the calm waves with lilies.  
They did these things, I tell you, in very truth, cloud-hidden indeed; but the things themselves are with us to this day. No town on earth is more real than that town of Troy. Her prince, long ago, was dragged dead round the walls that AEacus built; but her princedom did not die with him. Only a few weeks since, I was actually standing, as I told you, with my good friend Mr. Parker, watching the lizards play among the chinks in the walls built by AEacus, for his wandering Trojans, by Tiber side. And, perhaps within memory of man, some of you may have walked up or down Tower Street, little thinking that its tower was also built by AEacus, for his wandering Trojans and their Caesar, by Thames side: and on Tower Hill itself--where I had my pocket picked only the other day by some of the modern AEacidae--stands the English Mint, "dividing" gold and silver which AEacus, first of all Greeks, divided in his island of AEgina, and struck into intelligible money-stamp and form, that men might render to Caesar the things which are Caesar's.  
But the Minos labyrinth is more real yet; at all events, more real for us. And what it was, and is, as you have seen at Lucca, you shall hear at Florence, where you are to learn Dante's opinion upon it, and Sandro Botticelli shall draw it for us.](61591.docx#chunk9879)

[That Hell, which so many people think the only place Dante gives any account of, (yet seldom know his account even of that,) was, he tells you, divided into upper, midmost, and nether pits. You usually lose sight of this main division of it, in the more complex one of the nine circles; but remember, these are divided in diminishing proportion: six of them are the upper hell; two, the midmost; one, the lowest. [34] You will find this a very pretty and curious proportion. Here it is in labyrinthine form, putting the three dimensions at right angles to each other, and drawing a spiral round them. I show you it in a spiral line, because the idea of descent is in Dante's mind, spiral (as of a worm's or serpent's coil) throughout; even to the mode of Geryon's flight, "ruota e discende;" and Minos accordingly indicates which circle any sinner is to be sent to, in a most graphically labyrinthine manner, by twisting his tail round himself so many times, necessarily thus marking the level.  
The uppermost and least dreadful hell, divided into six circles, is the hell of those who cannot rightly govern themselves, but have no mind to do mischief to any one else. In the lowest circle of this, and within the same walls with the more terrible mid-hell, whose stench even comes up and reaches to them, are people who have not rightly governed their thoughts: and these are buried for ever in fiery tombs, and their thoughts thus governed to purpose; which you, my friends, who are so fond of freedom of thought, and freedom of the press, may wisely meditate on.  
Then the two lower hells are for those who have wilfully done mischief to other people. And of these, some do open injury, and some, deceitful injury, and of these the rogues are put the lower; but there is a greater distinction in the manner of sin, than its simplicity or roguery:--namely, whether it be done in hot blood or cold blood. The injurious sins, done in hot blood--that is to say, under the influence of passion--are in the midmost hell; but the sins done in cold blood, without passion, or, more accurately, contrary to passion, far down below the freezing point, are put in the lowest hell: the ninth circle.  
Now, little as you may think it, or as the friend thought it, who tried to cure me of jesting the other day, I should not have taken upon me to write this 'Fors,' if I had not, in some degree, been cured of jesting long ago; and in the same way that Dante was,--for in my poor and faltering path I have myself been taken far enough down among the diminished circles to see this nether hell--the hell of Traitors; and to know, what people do not usually know of treachery, that it is not the fraud, but the cold-heartedness, which is chiefly dreadful in it. Therefore, this nether Hell is of ice, not fire; and of ice that nothing can break.  
  
"Oh, ill-starred folk, Beyond all others wretched, who abide In such a mansion as scarce thought finds words To speak of, better had ye here on earth Been flocks or mountain goats.  
I saw, before, and underneath my feet, A lake, whose frozen surface liker seemed To glass than water. Not so thick a veil In winter e'er hath Austrian Danube spread O'er his still course, nor Tanais, far remote Under the chilling sky. Rolled o'er that mass Had Tabernich or Pietrapana fallen Not even its rim had creaked. As peeps the frog, Croaking above the wave,--what time in dreams The village gleaner oft pursues her toil,-- Blue-pinched, and shrined in ice, the spirits stood, Moving their teeth in shrill note, like the stork."  
  
No more wandering of the feet in labyrinth like this, and the eyes, once cruelly tearless, now blind with frozen tears. But the midmost hell, for hot-blooded sinners, has other sort of lakes,--as, for instance, you saw a little while ago, of hot pitch, in which one bathes otherwise than in Serchio--(the Serchio is the river at Lucca, and Pietrapana a Lucchese mountain). But observe,--for here we get to our main work again,--the great boiling lake on the Phlegethon of this upper hell country is red, not black; and its source, as well as that of the river which freezes beneath, is in this island of Crete! in the Mount Ida, "joyous once with leaves and streams." You must look to the passage yourselves--'Inferno,' XIV. (line 120 in Carey)--for I have not room for it now. The first sight of it, to Dante, is as "a little brook, whose crimsoned wave Yet lifts my hair with horror." Virgil makes him look at this spring as the notablest thing seen by him in hell, since he entered its gate; but the great lake of it is under a ruinous mountain, like the fallen Alp through which the Adige foams down to Verona;--and on the crest of this ruin lies couched the enemy of Theseus--the Minotaur:  
  
"And there, At point of the disparted ridge, lay stretched The infamy of Crete--at sight of us It gnawed itself, as one with rage distract. To him my guide exclaimed, 'Perchance thou deem'st The King of Athens here.'"](61591.docx#chunk9880)

[Of whom and of his enemy, I have time to tell you no more to-day--except only that this Minotaur is the type or embodiment of the two essentially bestial sins of Anger and Lust;--that both these are in the human nature, interwoven inextricably with its chief virtue, Love, so that Dante makes this very ruin of the Rocks of hell, on which the Minotaur is couched, to be wrought on them at the instant when "the Universe was thrilled with love,"--(the last moment of the Crucifixion)--and that the labyrinth of these passions is one not fabulous, nor only pictured on coins of Crete. And the right interweaving of Anger with Love, in criminal justice, is the main question in earthly law, which the Athenian lawgiver had to deal with. Look, if you can, at my introductory Lectures at Oxford, p. 83; and so I must leave Theseus for this time;--in next letter, which will be chiefly on Christmas cheer, I must really try to get as far as his vegetable soup.  
As for AEacus, and his coining business, we must even let them alone now, till next year; only I have to thank some readers who have written to me on the subject of interest of money, (one or two complaining that I had dismissed it too summarily, when, alas! I am only at the threshold of it!), and, especially, my reader for the press, who has referred me to a delightful Italian book, 'Teoremi di Politica Cristiana,' (Naples, 1830,) and copied out ever so much of it for me; and Mr. Sillar, for farther most useful letters, of which to-day I can only quote this postscript:--  
"Please note that your next number of 'Fors Clavigera' ought to be in the hands of your readers on Friday, the 1st, or Saturday, the 2nd, of November. The following day being Sunday, the 3rd, there will be read in every church in England, or in the world, where the Church Service is used, the 15th Psalm, which distinctly declares the man who shall ascend to God's holy hill to be him who, amongst other things, has not put forth his money upon usury; a verse impiously ignored in most of the metrical versions of the Psalms; those adapted to popular tunes or popular prejudices."  
I think, accordingly, that some of my readers may be glad to have a sounder version of that Psalm; and as the 14th is much connected with it, and will be variously useful to us afterwards, here they both are, done into verse by an English squire,--or his sister, for they alike could rhyme; and the last finished singing what her brother left unsung, the Third Fors having early put seal on his lips.  
  
PSALM XIV.--(Dixit insipiens.)  
The foolish man by flesh and fancy ledd, His guilty hart with this fond thought hath fed: There is noe God that raigneth.  
And so thereafter he and all his mates Do workes, which earth corrupt, and Heaven hates: Not one that good remaineth.  
Even God himself sent down his piercing ey; If of this clayy race he could espy One, that his wisdome learneth.  
And loe, he findes that all a strayeng went: All plung'd in stincking filth, not one well bent, Not one that God discerneth.  
O maddnes of these folkes, thus loosly ledd! These caniballs, who, as if they were bread, Gods people do devower:  
Nor ever call on God; but they shall quake More than they now do bragg, when he shall take The just into his power.  
Indeede the poore, opprest by you, you mock: Their councells are your common jesting stock: But God is their recomfort.  
Ah, when from Syon shall the Saver come, That Jacob, freed by thee, may glad become And Israel full of comfort?  
  
  
PSALM XV.--(Domine, quis habitabit.)  
In tabernacle thine, O Lord, who shall remaine? Lord, of thy holy hill, who shall the rest obtaine? Ev'n he that leades a life of uncorrupted traine Whose deedes of righteous hart, whose harty wordes be plain: Who with deceitfull tongue hath never us'd to faine; Nor neighboure hurtes by deede, nor doth with slander stain: Whose eyes a person vile doth hold in vile disdaine, But doth, with honour greate, the godly entertaine: Who othe and promise given doth faithfully maintain, Although some worldly losse thereby he may sustain; From bityng usury who ever doth refraine: Who sells not guiltlesse cause for filthy love of gain, Who thus proceedes for ay, in sacred mount shall raign.  
  
You may not like this old English at first; but if you can find anybody to read it to you who has an ear, its cadence is massy and grand, more than that of most verse I know, and never a word is lost. Whether you like it or not, the sense of it is true, and the way to the sacred mount, (of which mounts, whether of Pity, or of Roses, are but shadows,) told you for once, straightforwardly,--on which road I wish you God-speed.  
  
Ever faithfully yours,  
JOHN RUSKIN.  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
FORS CLAVIGERA.  
LETTER XXIV.  
  
Corpus Christi Coll., November 7th, 1872.  
My Friends,](61591.docx#chunk9881)

[I shall not call you so any more, after this Christmas; first, because things have chanced to me, of late, which have made me too sulky to be friends with anybody; secondly, because in the two years during which I have been writing these letters, not one of you has sent me a friendly word of answer; lastly, because, even if you were my friends, it would be waste print to call you so, once a month. Nor shall I sign myself "faithfully yours" any more; being very far from faithfully my own, and having found most other people anything but faithfully mine. Nor shall I sign my name, for I never like the look of it; being, I apprehend, only short for "Rough Skin," in the sense of "Pig-skin"; (and indeed, the planet under which I was born, Saturn, has supreme power over pigs,)--nor can I find historical mention of any other form of the name, except one I made no reference to when it occurred, as that of the leading devil of four,--Red-skin, Blue-skin--and I forget the skins of the other two--who performed in a religious play, of the fourteenth century, which was nearly as comic as the religious earnest of our own century. So that the letters will begin henceforward without address; and close without signature. You will probably know whom they come from, and I don't in the least care whom they go to.  
I was in London, all day yesterday, where the weather was as dismal as is its wont; and, returning here by the evening train, saw, with astonishment, the stars extricate themselves from the fog, and the moon glow for a little while in her setting, over the southern Berkshire hills, as I breathed on the platform at the Reading station;--(for there were six people in the carriage, and they had shut both the windows).  
When I got to Oxford, the sky was entirely clear; the Great Bear was near the ground under the pole, and the Charioteer high over-head, the principal star of him as bright as a gas-lamp.  
It is a curious default in the stars, to my mind, that there is a Charioteer among them without a chariot; and a Waggon with no waggoner; nor any waggon, for that matter, except the Bear's stomach; but I have always wanted to know the history of the absent Charles, who must have stopped, I suppose to drink, while his cart went on, and so never got to be stellified himself. I wish I knew; but I can tell you less about him than even about Theseus. The Charioteer's story is pretty, however:--he gave his life for a kiss, and did not get it; got made into stars instead. It would be a dainty tale to tell you under the mistletoe: perhaps I may have time next year: to-day it is of the stars of Ariadne's crown I want to speak.  
But that giving one's life for a kiss, and not getting it, is indeed a general abstract of the Greek notion of heroism, and its reward; and, by the way, does it not seem to you a grave defect in the stars, at Christmas time, that all their stories are Greek--not one Christian? In all the east, and all the west, there is not a space of heaven with a Christian story in it; the star of the Wise men having risen but once, and set, it seems, for ever; and the stars of Foolish men--innumerable, but unintelligible, forming, I suppose, all across the sky that broad way of Asses' milk; while a few Greek heroes and hunters, a monster or two, and some crustaceous animals, occupy, here in the north, our heaven's compass, down to the very margin of the illuminated book. A sky quite good enough for us, nevertheless, for all the use we make of it, either by night or day--or any hope we have of getting into it--or any inclination we have, while still out of it, to "take stars for money."  
Yet, with all deference to George Herbert, I will take them for nothing of the sort. Money is an entirely pleasant and proper thing to have, itself; and the first shilling I ever got in my life, I put in a pill-box, and put it under my pillow, and couldn't sleep all night for satisfaction. I couldn't have done that with a star; though truly the pretty system of usury makes the stars drop down something else than dew. I got a note from an arithmetical friend the other day, speaking of the death of "an old lady, a cousin of mine, who left--left, because she could not take it with her--200,000l. On calculation, I found this old lady, who has been lying bedridden for a year, was accumulating money (i.e. the results of other people's labour,) at the rate of 4d. a minute; in other words, she awoke in the morning ten pounds richer than she went to bed." At which, doubtless, and the like miracles throughout the world, "the stars with deep amaze, stand fixed with steadfast gaze;" for this is, indeed, a Nativity of an adverse god to the one you profess to honour, with them, and the angels, at Christmas, by over-eating yourselves.](61591.docx#chunk9882)

[I suppose that is the quite essential part of the religion of Christmas; and, indeed, it is about the most religious thing you do in the year; and if pious people would understand, generally, that, if there be indeed any other God than Mammon, He likes to see people comfortable, and nicely dressed, as much as Mammon likes to see them fasting and in rags, they might set a wiser example to everybody than they do. I am frightened out of my wits, every now and then, here at Oxford, by seeing something come out of poor people's houses, all dressed in black down to the ground; which, (having been much thinking of wicked things lately,) I at first take for the Devil, and then find, to my extreme relief and gratification, that it's a Sister of Charity. Indeed, the only serious disadvantage of eating, and fine dressing, considered as religious ceremonies, whether at Christmas, or on Sunday, in the Sunday dinner and Sunday gown,--is that you don't always clearly understand what the eating and dressing signify. For example: why should Sunday be kept otherwise than Christmas, and be less merry? Because it is a day of rest, commemorating the fulfilment of God's easy work, while Christmas is a day of toil, commemorating the beginning of His difficult work? Is that the reason? Or because Christmas commemorates His stooping to thirty years of sorrow, and Sunday His rising to countless years of joy? Which should be the gladdest day of the two, think you, on either ground? Why haven't you Sunday pantomimes?  
It is a strait and sore question with me, for when I was a child, I lost the pleasure of some three-sevenths of my life because of Sunday; for I always had a way of looking forward to things, and a lurid shade was cast over the whole of Friday and Saturday by the horrible sense that Sunday was coming, and inevitable. Not that I was rebellious against my good mother or aunts in any wise; feeling only that we were all crushed under a relentless fate; which was indeed the fact, for neither they nor I had the least idea what Holiness meant, beyond what I find stated very clearly by Mr. David--the pious author of "The Paradezeal system of Botany, an arrangement representing the whole globe as a vast blooming and fruitful Paradise,"--that "Holiness is a knowledge of the Ho's."  
My mother, indeed, never went so far as my aunt; nor carried her religion down to the ninth or glacial circle of Holiness, by giving me cold dinner; and to this day, I am apt to over-eat myself with Yorkshire pudding, in remembrance of the consolation it used to afford me at one o'clock. Good Friday, also, was partly "intermedled," as Chaucer would call it, with light and shade, because there were hot-cross-buns at breakfast, though we had to go to church afterwards. And, indeed, I observe, happening to have under my hand the account in the 'Daily Telegraph' of Good Friday at the Crystal Palace, in 1870, that its observance is for your sakes also now "intermedled" similarly, with light and shade, by conscientious persons: for in that year, "whereas in former years the performances had been exclusively of a religious character, the directors had supplemented their programme with secular amusements." It was, I suppose, considered "secular" that the fountains should play (though I have noticed that natural ones persist in that profane practice on Sunday also), and accordingly, "there was a very abundant water-supply, while a brilliant sun gave many lovely prismatic effects to the fleeting and changeful spray" (not careful, even the sun, for his part, to remember how once he became "black as sackcloth of hair"). "A striking feature presented itself to view in the shape of the large and handsome pavilion of Howe and Cushing's American circus. This vast pavilion occupies the whole centre of the grand terrace, and was gaily decorated with bunting and fringed with the show-carriages of the circus, which were bright with gilding, mirrors, portraits, and scarlet panels. The out-door amusements began"--(the English public always retaining a distinct impression that this festival was instituted in the East)--"with an Oriental procession"--(by the way, why don't we always call Wapping the Oriental end of London?)--"of fifteen camels from the circus, mounted by negroes wearing richly coloured and bespangled Eastern costume. The performances then commenced, and continued throughout the day, the attractions comprising the trained wolves, the wonderful monkeys, and the usual scenes in the circle."  
"There was darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour." I often wonder, myself, how long it will be, in the crucifixion afresh, which all the earth has now resolved upon, crying with more unanimous shout than ever the Jews, "Not this man, but Barabbas"--before the Ninth Hour comes.  
Assuming, however, that, for the nonce, trained wolves and wonderful monkeys are proper entertainments on Good Friday, pantomimes on Boxing-day, and sermons on Sunday, have you ever considered what observance might be due to Saturday,--the day on which He "preached to the spirits in prison"? for that seems to me quite the part of the three days' work which most of us might first hope for a share in. I don't know whether any of you perceive that your spirits are in prison. I know mine is, and that I would fain have it preached to, and delivered, if it be possible. For, however far and steep the slope may have been into the hell which you say every Sunday that you believe He descended into, there are places trenched deep enough now in all our hearts for the hot lake of Phlegethon to leak and ooze into: and the rock of their shore is no less hard than in Dante's time.](61591.docx#chunk9883)

[And as your winter rejoicings, if they mean anything at all, mean that you have now, at least, a chance of deliverance from that prison, I will ask you to take the pains to understand what the bars and doors of it are, as the wisest man who has yet spoken of them tells you.  
There is first, observe, this great distinction in his mind between the penalties of the Hell, and the joy of Paradise. The penalty is assigned to definite act of hand; the joy, to definite state of mind. It is questioned of no one, either in the Purgatory or the Paradise, what he has done; but only what evil feeling is still in his heart, or what good, when purified wholly, his nature is noble enough to receive.  
On the contrary, Hell is constituted such by the one great negative state of being without Love or Fear of God;--there are no degrees of that State; but there are more or less dreadful sins which can be done in it, according to the degradation of the unredeemed Human nature. And men are judged according to their works.  
To give a single instance. The punishment of the fourth circle in Hell is for the Misuse of Money, for having either sinfully kept it, or sinfully spent it. But the pain in Purgatory is only for having sinfully Loved it: and the hymn of repentance is, "My soul cleaveth unto the dust; quicken thou me."  
Farther, and this is very notable. You might at first think that Dante's divisions were narrow and artificial, in assigning each circle to one sin only, as if every man did not variously commit many. But it is always one sin, the favourite, which destroys souls. That conquered, all others fall with it; that victorious, all others follow with it. Nevertheless, as I told you, the joiner's work, and interwoven walls of Dante's Inferno, marking double forms of sin, and their overlapping, as it were, when they meet, is one of the subtlest conditions traceable in his whole design.  
Look back to the scheme I gave you in last number. The Minotaur, spirit of lust and anger, rules over the central hell. But the sins of lust and anger, definitely and limitedly described as such, are punished in the upper hell, in the second and fifth circles. Why is this, think you?  
Have you ever noticed--enough to call it noticing seriously--the expression, "fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind"? There is one lust and one anger of the flesh only; these, all men must feel; rightly feel, if in temperance; wrongly, if in excess; but even then, not necessarily to the destruction of their souls. But there is another lust, and another anger, of the heart; and these are the Furies of Phlegethon--wholly ruinous. Lord of these, on the shattered rocks, lies couched the Infamy of Crete. For when the heart, as well as the flesh, desires what it should not, and the heart, as well as the flesh, consents and kindles to its wrath, the whole man is corrupted, and his heart's blood is fed in its veins from the lake of fire.  
Take for special example, this sin of usury with which we have ourselves to deal. The punishment in the fourth circle of the upper hell is on Avarice, not Usury. For a man may be utterly avaricious,--greedy of gold--in an instinctive, fleshly way, yet not corrupt his intellect. Many of the most good-natured men are misers: my first shilling in the pill-box and sleepless night did not at all mean that I was an ill-natured or illiberal boy; it did mean, what is true of me still, that I should have great delight in counting money, and laying it in visible heaps and rouleaux. I never part with a new sovereign without a sigh: and if it were not that I am afraid of thieves, I would positively and seriously, at this moment, turn all I have into gold of the newest, and dig a hole for it in my garden, and go and look at it every morning and evening, like the man in AEsop's Fables, or Silas Marner: and where I think thieves will not break through nor steal, I am always laying up for myself treasures upon earth, with the most eager appetite: that bit of gold and diamonds, for instance (IV. 8.), and the most gilded mass-books, and such like, I can get hold of; the acquisition of a Koran, with two hundred leaves richly gilt on both sides, only three weeks since, afforded me real consolation under variously trying circumstances.  
Truly, my soul cleaves to the dust of such things. But I have not so perverted my soul, nor palsied my brains, as to expect to be advantaged by that adhesion. I don't expect, because I have gathered much, to find Nature or man gathering for me more:--to find eighteenpence in my pill-box in the morning, instead of a shilling, as a "reward for continence;" or to make an income of my Koran by lending it to poor scholars. If I think a scholar can read it,--(N.B., I can't, myself,)--and would like to--and will carefully turn the leaves by the outside edge, he is welcome to read it for nothing: if he has got into the habit of turning leaves by the middle, or of wetting his finger, and shuffling up the corners, as I see my banker's clerks do with their ledgers, for no amount of money shall he read it. (Incidentally, note the essential vulgarism of doing anything in a hurry.)  
So that my mind and brains are in fact untainted and unwarped by lust of money, and I am free in that respect from the power of the Infamy of Crete.  
I used the words just above--Furies of Phlegethon. You are beginning to know something of the Fates: of the Furies also you must know something.](61591.docx#chunk9884)

[The pit of Dante's central hell is reserved for those who have actually committed malicious crime, involving mercilessness to their neighbour, or, in suicide, to themselves. But it is necessary to serpent-tail this pit with the upper hell by a district for insanity without deed; the Fury which has brought horror to the eyes, and hardness to the heart, and yet, having possessed itself of noble persons, issues in no malicious crime. Therefore the sixth circle of the upper hell is walled in, together with the central pit, as one grievous city of the dead; and at the gates of it the warders are fiends, and the watchers Furies.  
Watchers, observe, as sleepless. Once in their companionship,  
  
Nor poppy, nor mandragora, Nor all the drowsy syrups of the world, Shall ever medicine thee to that sweet sleep Which thou owed'st yesterday.  
  
Sleepless and merciless; and yet in the Greek vision of them which AEschylus wrote, they are first seen asleep; and they remain in the city of Theseus, in mercy.  
Elsewhere, furies that make the eyes evil and the heart hard. Seeing Dante from their watch-tower, they call for Medusa. "So will we make flint of him" ("enamel," rather--which has been in the furnace first, then hardened); but Virgil puts his hands over his eyes.  
Thus the upper hell is knitted to the central. The central is half joined to the lower by the power of Fraud: only in the central hell, though in a deeper pit of it, (Phlegethon falls into the abyss in a Niagara of blood) Fraud is still joined with human passion, but in the nether hell is passionate no more; the traitors have not natures of flesh or of fire, but of earth; and the earth-giants, the first enemies of Athena, the Greek spirit of Life, stand about the pit, speechless, as towers of war. In a bright morning, this last midsummer, at Bologna, I was standing in the shade of the tower of Garisenda, which Dante says they were like. The sun had got just behind its battlements, and sent out rays round them as from behind a mountain peak, vast and grey against the morning sky. I may be able to get some picture of it, for the January 'Fors,' perhaps; and perchance the sun may some day rise for us from behind our Towers of Treachery.  
Note but this farther, and then we will try to get out of Hell for to-day. The divisions of the central fire are under three creatures, all of them partly man, partly animal. The Minotaur has a man's body, a bull's head, (which is precisely the general type of the English nation to-day). The Centaur Chiron has a horse's body; a man's head and breast. The Spirit of Fraud, Geryon, has a serpent's body, his face is that of a just man, and his breast chequered like a lizard's, with labyrinthine lines.  
All these three creatures signify the mingling of a brutal instinct with the human mind; but, in the Minotaur, the brute rules, the humanity is subordinate; in the Centaur, the man rules, and the brute is subordinate; in the third, the man and the animal are in harmony; and both false.  
Of the Centaurs, Chiron and Nessus, one, the type of human gentleness, justice, and wisdom, stooping to join itself with the nature of animals, and to be healed by the herbs of the ground,--the other, the destruction of Hercules,--you shall be told in the 'Fors' of January: to-day I must swiftly sum the story of Theseus.  
His conquest of the Minotaur, the chief glory of his life, is possible only to him through love, and love's hope and help. But he has no joy either of love or victory. Before he has once held Ariadne in his arms, Diana kills her in the isle of Naxos. Jupiter crowns her in heaven, where there is no following her. Theseus returns to Athens alone.  
The ship which hitherto had carried the Minotaur's victim's only, bore always a black sail. Theseus had received from his father a purple one, to hoist instead, if he returned victorious.  
The common and senseless story is that he forgot to hoist it. Forgot! A sail is so inconspicuous a part of a ship! and one is so likely to forget one's victory, returning, with home seen on the horizon! But he returned not victorious, at least for himself;--Diana and Death had been too strong for him. He bore the black sail. And his father, when he saw it, threw himself from the rock of Athens, and died.  
Of which the meaning is, that we must not mourn for ourselves, lest a worse thing happen to us,--a Greek lesson much to be remembered by Christians about to send expensive orders to the undertaker: unless, indeed, they mean by their black vestments to tell the world that they think their friends are in hell. If in Heaven, with Ariadne and the gods, are we to mourn? And if they were fit for Heaven, are we, for ourselves, ever to leave off mourning? Yet Theseus, touching the beach, is too just and wise to mourn there. He sends a herald to the city to tell his father he is safe; stays on the shore to sacrifice to the gods, and feast his sailors. He sacrifices; and makes pottage for them there on the sand. The herald returns to tell him his father is dead also. Such welcome has he for his good work, in the islands, and on the main.](61591.docx#chunk9885)

[In which work he persists, no less, and is redeemed from darkness by Hercules, and at last helps Hercules himself in his sorest need--as you shall hear afterwards. I must stop to-day at the vegetable soup,--which you would think, I suppose, poor Christmas cheer. Plum-pudding is an Egyptian dish; but have you ever thought how many stories were connected with this Athenian one, pottage of lentils? A bargain of some importance, even to us, (especially as usurers); and the healing miracle of Elisha; and the vision of Habakkuk as he was bearing their pottage to the reapers, and had to take it far away to one who needed it more; and, chiefly of all, the soup of the bitter herbs, with its dipped bread and faithful company,--"he it is to whom I shall give the sop when I have dipped it." The meaning of which things, roughly, is, first, that we are not to sell our birth-rights for pottage, though we fast to death; but are diligently to know and keep them: secondly, that we are to poison no man's pottage, mental or real: lastly, that we look to it lest we betray the hand which gives us our daily bread.  
Lessons to be pondered on at Christmas time over our pudding; and the more, because the sops we are dipping for each other, and even for our own children, are not always the most nourishing, nor are the rooms in which we make ready their last supper always carefully furnished. Take, for instance, this example of last supper--(no, I see it is breakfast)--in Chicksand Street, Mile End:--  
  
On Wednesday an inquest was held on the body of Annie Redfern, aged twenty-eight, who was found dead in a cellar at 5, Chicksand Street, Mile End, on the morning of last Sunday. This unfortunate woman was a fruit-seller, and rented the cellar in which she died at 1s. 9d. per week--her only companion being a little boy, aged three years, of whom she was the mother. It appeared from the evidence of the surgeon who was summoned to see the deceased when her body was discovered on Sunday morning that she had been dead some hours before his arrival. Her knees were drawn up and her arms folded in such a position as to show that she died with her child clasped in her arms. The room was very dark, without any ventilation, and was totally unfit for human habitation. The cause of death was effusion of serum into the pericardium, brought on greatly by living in such a wretched dwelling. The coroner said that as there were so many of these wretched dwellings about, he hoped the jurymen who were connected with the vestry would take care to represent the case to the proper authorities, and see that the place was not let as a dwelling again. This remark from the coroner incited a juryman to reply, "Oh, if we were to do that we might empty half the houses in London; there are thousands more like that, and worse." Some of the jurors objected to the room being condemned; the majority, however, refused to sign the papers unless this was done, and a verdict was returned in accordance with the evidence. It transpired that the body had to be removed to save it from the rats. If the little child who lay clasped in his dead mother's arms has not been devoured by these animals, he is probably now in the workhouse, and will remain a burden on the ratepayers, who unfortunately have no means of making the landlord of the foul den that destroyed his mother answerable for his support.  
  
I miss, out of the column of the 'Pall Mall' for the 1st of this month, one paragraph after this, and proceed to the next but one, which relates to the enlightened notion among English young women, derived from Mr. J. Stuart Mill,--that the "career" of the Madonna is too limited a one, and that modern political economy can provide them, as the 'Pall Mall' observes, with "much more lucrative occupations than that of nursing the baby." But you must know, first, that the Athenians always kept memory of Theseus' pot of vegetable soup, and of his sacrifice, by procession in spring-time, bearing a rod wreathed with lambs'-wool, and singing an Easter carol, in these words:--  
"Fair staff, may the gods grant, by thee, the bringing of figs to us, and buttery cakes, and honey in bulging cups, and the sopping of oil, and wine in flat cups, easy to lift, that thou mayest" (meaning that we may, but not clear which is which,) "get drunk and sleep."  
Which Mr. Stuart Mill and modern political economy have changed into a pretty Christmas carol for English children, lambs for whom the fair staff also brings wine of a certain sort, in flat cups, "that they may get drunk, and sleep." Here is the next paragraph from the 'Pall Mall':--](61591.docx#chunk9886)

[One of the most fertile causes of excessive infant mortality is the extensive practice in manufacturing districts of insidiously narcotising young children that they may be the more conveniently laid aside when more lucrative occupations present themselves than that of nursing the baby. Hundreds of gallons of opium in various forms are sold weekly in many districts for this purpose. Nor is it likely that the practice will be checked until juries can be induced to take a rather severe view of the suddenly fatal misadventures which this sort of chronic poisoning not unfrequently produces. It appears, however, to be very difficult to persuade them to look upon it as other than a venial offence. An inquest was recently held at Chapel Gate upon the body of an infant who had died from the administration, by its mother, of about twelve times the proper dose of laudanum. The bottle was labelled carefully with a caution that "opium should not be given to children under seven years of age." In this case five drops of laudanum were given to a baby of eighteen months. The medical evidence was of a quite unmistakable character, and the coroner in summing up read to the jury a definition of manslaughter, and told them that "a lawful act, if dangerous, not attended with such care as would render the probability of danger very small, and resulting in death, would amount to manslaughter at the least. Then in this case they must return a verdict of manslaughter unless they could find any circumstance which would take it out of the rule of law he had laid down to them. It was not in evidence that the mother had used any caution at all in administering the poison." Nevertheless, the jury returned, after a short interval, the verdict of homicide by misadventure.  
  
"Hush-a-bye, baby, upon the tree top," my mother used to sing to me: and I remember the dawn of intelligence in which I began to object to the bad rhyme which followed:--"when the wind blows, the cradle will rock." But the Christmas winds must blow rudely, and warp the waters askance indeed, which rock our English cradles now.  
Mendelssohn's songs without words have been, I believe, lately popular in musical circles. We shall, perhaps, require cradle songs with very few words, and Christmas carols with very sad ones, before long; in fact, it seems to me, we are fast losing our old skill in carolling. There is a different tone in Chaucer's notion of it (though this carol of his is in spring-time indeed, not at Christmas):--  
  
Then went I forth on my right hand, Down by a little path I found, Of Mintes full, and Fennel greene.  
Sir Mirth I found, and right anon Unto Sir Mirth gan I gone, There, where he was, him to solace: And with him, in that happy place, So fair folke and so fresh, had he, That when I saw, I wondered me From whence such folke might come, So fair were they, all and some; For they were like, as in my sight To angels, that be feathered bright. These folke, of which I tell you so, Upon a karole wenten tho, [35] A Ladie karoled them, that hight [36] Gladnesse, blissful and light. She could make in song such refraining It sate her wonder well to sing, Her voice full clear was, and full sweet, She was not rude, nor unmeet, But couth [37] enough for such doing, As longeth unto karolling; For she was wont, in every place, To singen first, men to solace. For singing most she gave her to, No craft had she so lefe [38] to do.  
  
Mr. Stuart Mill would have set her to another craft, I fancy (not but that singing is a lucrative one, now-a-day, if it be shrill enough); but you will not get your wives to sing thus for nothing, if you send them out to earn their dinners (instead of earning them yourselves for them), and put their babies summarily to sleep.  
It is curious how our English feeling seems to be changed also towards two other innocent kind of creatures. In nearly all German pictures of the Nativity, (I have given you an Italian one of the Magi for a frontispiece, this time,) the dove is one way or other conspicuous, and the little angels round the cradle are nearly always, when they are tired, allowed by the Madonna to play with rabbits. And in the very garden in which Ladie Gladness leads her karol-dance, "connis," as well as squirrels, are among the happy company; frogs only, as you shall hear, not being allowed; the French says, no flies either, of the watery sort! For the path among the mint and fennel greene leads us into this garden:--  
  
The garden was by measuring, Right even and square in compasing: It was long as it was large, Of fruit had every tree his charge, And many homely trees there were, [39] That peaches, coines, [40] and apples bare. Medlers, plommes, peeres, chesteinis, Cherise, of which many one faine [41] is, With many a high laurel and pine Was ranged clean all that gardene. There might men Does and Roes see, And of Squirrels ful great plentee From bough to bough alway leping; Connis there were also playing And maden many a tourneying Upon the fresh grass springing. In places saw I wells there In which no frogges were. There sprang the violet all new And fresh pervinke, rich of hue, And flowers yellow, white and rede, Such plenty grew there never in mede, Full gay was all the ground, and quaint, And poudred, as men had it peint With many a fresh and sundry flour That castes up full good savour.](61591.docx#chunk9887)

[So far for an old English garden, or "pleasance," and the pleasures of it. Now take a bit of description written this year of a modern English garden or pleasance, and the pleasures of it, and newly invented odours:--  
  
In a short time the sportsmen issued from the (new?) hall, and, accompanied by sixty or seventy attendants, bent their steps towards that part of the park in which the old hall is situate. Here were the rabbit covers--large patches of rank fern, three or four feet in height, and extending over many acres. The doomed rabbits, assiduously driven from the burrows during the preceding week by the keepers, forced from their lodgings beneath the tree-roots by the suffocating fumes of sulphur, and deterred from returning thither by the application of gas-tar to the "runs," had been forced to seek shelter in the fern patch; and here they literally swarmed. At the edge of the ferns a halt was called, and the head gamekeeper proceeded to arrange his assistants in the most approved "beating" fashion. The shooting party, nine in number, including the prince, distributed themselves in advance of the line of beaters, and the word "Forward!" was given. Simultaneously the line of beaters moved into the cover, vigorously thrashing the long ferns with their stout sticks, and giving vent to a variety of uncouth ejaculations, which it was supposed were calculated to terrify the hidden rabbits. Hardly had the beaters proceeded half-a-dozen yards when the cover in front of them became violently agitated, and rabbits were seen running in all directions. The quantity of game thus started was little short of marvellous--the very ground seemed to be alive. Simultaneously with the appearance of the terrified animals the slaughter commenced. Each sportsman carried a double-barrelled breechloader, and an attendant followed him closely, bearing an additional gun, ready loaded. The shooter discharged both barrels of his gun, in some cases with only the interval of a second or two, and immediately exchanged it for a loaded one. Rabbits fell in all directions. The warning cry of "Rabbit!" from the relentless keepers was heard continuously, and each cry was as quickly followed by the sharp crack of a gun--a pretty sure indication that the rabbit referred to had come to an untimely end, as the majority of the sportsmen were crack shots.  
  
Of course all this is quite natural to a sporting people who have learned to like the smell of gunpowder, sulphur, and gas-tar, better than that of violets and thyme. But, putting the baby-poisoning, pigeon-shooting, and rabbit-shooting of to-day in comparison with the pleasures of the German Madonna, and her simple company; and of Chaucer and his carolling company: and seeing that the present effect of peace upon earth, and well-pleasing in men, is that every nation now spends most of its income in machinery for shooting the best and bravest men, just when they were likely to have become of some use to their fathers and mothers, I put it to you, my friends all, calling you so, I suppose, for the last time, (unless you are disposed for friendship with Herod instead of Barabbas,) whether it would not be more kind and less expensive, to make the machinery a little smaller; and adapt it to spare opium now, and expenses of maintenance and education afterwards, (besides no end of diplomacy) by taking our sport in shooting babies instead of rabbits?  
  
Believe me, Faithfully yours,  
J. RUSKIN.  
  
  
  
  
NOTES AND CORRESPONDENCE.  
  
==> The first number of 'Fors Clavigera' for the year 1873 will be published (I hope) on 1st January next, and in the course of that month the Index to the two first volumes, for the years 1871, 1872, as an extra number, which will be sent gratis to subscribers to the complete work.  
Subscriptions to the St. George's Fund have been sent to me to the amount of 104l. 1s. I have therefore sent a cheque for 100l. to be added to the fund accumulating in the hands of the trustees.  
I think it inexpedient at present to give the names of my--not numerous--subscribers. Each of them knows his or her number in the subjoined list:--  
  
PS s. d.  
1. Annual, 4l. (1871, 1872) 8 0 0 2. Annual, 20l. (1871, 1872) 40 0 0 3. Gift (1871) 5 0 0 4. Gift (1872) 30 0 0 5. Gift (1872) 20 0 0 6. Annual (1872) 1 1 0 ---------- PS104 1 0  
  
It is a beginning. We shall get on in time--better than some companies that have started with large capital.  
The following cry of distress, from a bookseller of the most extended experience, has lain all this year by me, till I could find opportunity, which has not come, for commending its sound common sense in relation to several matters besides what it immediately touches on. It must stand on its own worth now, and is well able to do so.  
  
"February 28th, 1872.  
  
"It is often a question of considerable embarrassment for parents to know what to do with their children, and to place them in such a manner in a trade or profession as would best fit their talents and aptitudes.  
"Notions of 'gentility' induce too many parents to bring up their sons for professions or the Civil Service, and their daughters for a status which they are unlikely to attain.  
"I will say here only a few words to parents of the humbler classes:--Do not be allured by advertisements into seeking for your sons appointments as clerks in offices where a boy starts at once with a salary and short hours of business. Rely upon it, these tempting offers lead to poor prospects; hence has arisen the superabundant supply of 'genteel clerks,' and the deficient supply of good mechanics. It is much to be regretted that the former practice of apprenticeship has fallen so much out of use. Better mechanics were certainly thus formed.](61591.docx#chunk9888)

["There is one mechanical trade with which I am especially connected, viz., that of bookbinding. I regret to say, that an extreme difficulty exists to obtain intelligent and willing men to do the work which is ready to be given out. I ascribe this largely to a defective education of our youth. There is too much conceit amongst parents and their children as to their future in life, too much uniformity of thought, and by far too little exertion and preparation for the struggles of existence. Walking-sticks, meerschaum-pipes, and cheap sensational journals are found in the hands of strutting youngsters, who ought to be modestly attired, and who ought earnestly to prepare themselves for their future career.  
"In mentioning such a trade as bookbinding, I wish to convey that it is not the heavy and idle who are wanted, but the hardy and intelligent boys; and the better they are educated, the better are their future chances of success in life.  
"Being very much hampered in my pursuit as a bookseller by the want of proper execution in the binding and furbishing of books, I can speak decidedly to the fact that there is ample room for many more labourers in that interesting trade. Intelligence, honesty, and physical strength are required in starting a youth in every business; and when parents have prepared their children with these qualifications, a successful career in the bookbinding trade may be safely guaranteed.  
"It is painful to me, and must be equally unpleasant to all owners of libraries, to suffer constantly from the protracted delays caused by the deficiency of good workmen in the binding business.  
"Those curses of modern society, [42] 'Trades' Unions,' on one side, and absurd notions of gentility on the other, are doing each their share of harm in keeping down the supply of new hands.  
"I repeat--more hands, 'with heads,' are wanted in the bookbinding trade. This is a cry of distress from a bookseller whose business is injured owing to the delays and the inefficiency of the existing binders and their workmen."  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
NOTES  
  
[1] See 'Pall Mall Gazette,' Dec. 5th, 1871.  
[2] Letter IV. p. 21. Compare Letter V. p. 5; and observe, in future references of this kind I shall merely say, IV. 21; V. 5, etc.  
[3] J. A. Froude, 'Short Studies on Great Subjects.' Longmans, 1867. Page 297.  
[4] "You did not shoot him"? No; my expression was hasty; you only stood by, in a social manner, to see him shot;--how many of you?--and so finely organized as you say you are!  
[5] I quote from the 'Pall Mall Gazette' of January 16th. In the more elaborate review given in the 'Fortnightly,' I am glad to see that Professor Caird is beginning to perceive the necessity of defining the word "useful;" and, though greatly puzzled, is making way towards a definition: but would it not be wiser to abstain from exhibiting himself in his state of puzzlement to the public?  
[6] Every man as good as his neighbour! you extremely sagacious English persons; and forthwith you establish competitive examination, which drives your boys into idiotcy, before you will give them a bit of bread to make their young muscles of! Every man as good as his neighbour! and when I told you, seven years ago, that at least you should give every man his penny of wages, whether he was good or not, so only that he gave you the best that was in him, what did you answer to me?  
[7] Cornutus, quoted by Ducange under the word 'Baro.'  
[8] I am told in the north such pleasant fiction still holds in the Teesdale district; the wife calling her husband 'my masterman.'  
[9] 'The Book of a Hundred Ballads.' You shall hear more of them, soon.  
[10] This singular use of the word 'free' in baronial times, corresponding to our present singular use of it respecting trade, we will examine in due time. A soldier who fights only for his own hand, and a merchant who sells only for his own hand, are of course, in reality, equally the slaves of the persons who employ them. Only the soldier is truly free, and only the merchants, who fight and sell as their country needs, and bids them.  
[11] I always give Mr. Rawdon Brown's translation from his work, 'The English in Italy,' already quoted.  
[12] Remember, briefly always, till I can tell you more about it, that the first Fors is Courage, the second, Patience, the third, Fortune.  
[13] Between May and October, any letters meant for me should be addressed to Brantwood, Coniston; between October and May, to Corpus Christi College, Oxford. They must be very short, and very plainly written, or they will not be read; and they need never ask me to do anything, because I won't do it. And, in general, I cannot answer letters; but for any that come to help me, the writers may be sure that I am grateful. I get a great many from people who "know that I must be good-natured," from my books. I was good-natured once; but I beg to state, in the most positive terms, that I am now old, tired, and very ill-natured.  
[14] "Type," the actual word in the Greek.  
[15] "Davantage, ilz se nommoyent Forestiers, non que leur charge et gouvernement fust seulement sur la terre, qui estoit lors occupee et empeschee de la forest Charbonniere, mais la garde de la mer leur estoit aussi commise. Convient ici entendre, que ce terme, forest, en vieil bas Aleman, convenoit aussi bien aux eaux comme aux boys, ainsi qu'il est narre es memoires de Jean du Tillet."--'Les Genealogies des Forestiers et Comtes de Flandres' AntP. 1598.](61591.docx#chunk9889)

[[16] I accept the blame of vanity in printing the end of this letter, for the sake of showing more perfectly the temper of its writer, whom I have answered privately; in case my letter may not reach him, I should be grateful if he would send me again his address.  
[17] Sismondi: 'History of Italian Republics,' Vol. III., Chap. ii.  
[18] "Saccone of Pietra-mala."  
[19] Second Edition, Milan, 1870. (Fratelli Rechiadei), p. 86.  
[20] "And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig-tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind."--Rev. vi. 13; compare Jerem. xxiv. 8, and Amos viii. 1 and 2.  
[21] More accurately a rod cloven into three at the top, and so holding the wool. The fruit is a branch of apples; she has golden sandals, and a wreath of myrtle round her hair.  
[22] The "Mount" is the heap of money in store for lending without interest. You shall have a picture of it in next number, as drawn by a brave landscape painter four hundred years ago; and it will ultimately be one of the crags of our own Mont Rose; and well should be, for it was first raised among the rocks of Italy by a Franciscan monk, for refuge to the poor against the usury of the Lombard merchants who gave name to our Lombard Street, and perished by their usury, as their successors are like enough to do also. But the story goes back to Friedrich II. of Germany again, and is too long for this letter.  
[23] [If that be so, booksellers are of no use in the world, and ought to be abolished. Am I to give my buyers unnecessary trouble that booksellers may live?]  
[24] Or of their native towns or villages,--these being recognized as masters, also.  
[25] Or the use of it, Mr. Emerson should have added.  
[26] 'English Traits,' (Routledge, 1856), p. 95.  
[27] Provost, Henrietta Street, Covent Garden.  
[28] The 'Telegraph' has always seemed to me to play fairer than the rest. The words "daily newspaper press" are, of course, too general.  
[29] Compare 'Munera Pulveris,' SS 140.  
[30] Compare also Mr. Maurice's sermon for the fourth Sunday after Trinity in Vol. II. of third series. (Smith, Elder & Co., no date.)  
[31] In calling a man pre-eminently unfortunate, I do not mean that, as compared with others, he is absolutely less prosperous; but that he is one who has met with the least help or the greatest hostility, from the Third Fors, in proportion to the wisdom of his purposes, and virtue of his character.  
[32] Italian 'fregata,' I believe 'polished-sided' ship, for swiftness, 'fricata;' but the derivation is uncertain.  
[33] Chaucer's real word means "warrest with all my folk;" but it was so closely connected with "weary" and "worry" in association of sound, in his days, that I take the last as nearest the sense.  
[34] The deepening orders of sin, in the nine circles, are briefly these,--1. Unredeemed nature; 2. Lust; 3. Gluttony; 4. Avarice; 5. Discontent; 6. Heresy; 7. Open violence; 8. Fraudful violence; 9. Treachery. But they are curiously dove-tailed together,--serpent-tailed, I should say,--by closer coil, not expanding plume. You shall understand the joiner's work next month.  
[35] Went then in measure of a carol dance.  
[36] Was called.  
[37] Skilful.  
[38] Fond.  
[39] There were foreign trees besides. I insert bits here and there, without putting stars to interrupt the pieces given.  
[40] Quinces.  
[41] Fond.  
[42] Let me, however, beg you to observe, my dear Sir, that the cursing is the fault of modern society, not of Trades' Unions, which were an extreme blessing to ancient society, and will be so to all wholesome societies, for ever.  
  
  
  
  
  
  
End of Project Gutenberg's Fors Clavigera (Volume 2 of 8), by John Ruskin](61591.docx#chunk9890)