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2

THE
LIFE, WRITINGS, AND PRINCIPLES
OF
THOMAS SPENCE,

AUTHOR OF THE
SPENCEAN SYSTEM, OR AGRARIAN EQUALITY.

BY ALLEN DAVENPORT.

WITH A PORTRAIT OF THE AUTHOR.

"No usage, law, or authority whatever, is so binding, that it need or ought to be continued, when it may be exchanged with advantage to the community. The family of the prince, the order of succession, the prerogative of the crown, the form and parts of the legislature, together with the respective powers, office, duration, and natural dependency of the several parts, are only laws, mutable like other laws, whenever expediency requires, either by the ordinary act of the legislature, or, if the occasion require it, by the interposition of the people."—PALEY.

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Lee, Printer, 31, Marylebone Lane.



ALLEN DAVENPORT.

AN ELEGY

On the Author of the Spencean System ; or Agrarian Equality.

Departed shade ! one who reveres thy name,
A kindred spirit, fain would sing thy fame ;
But how inadequate his language flows,
How poor the tribute that his zeal bestows ;
No heavenly muse breathes o'er his humble lyre,
To warm his numbers with celestial fire ;
No strain in modern or in ancient sage,
Supplies a parallel to thy bold page.

Lycurgus, Minos, Numa, Solon—all
The stars of ancient Greece and Rome may fall ;
But thy pure light shall in its orbit run,
Bright and as changeless as the glorious sun !
And shine through every age in every clime,
While nature's pulse beats to the march of time !

Oh ! could the muse in burning numbers sing,
And to the earth again thy spirit bring ;
What countless multitudes would court thy sight,
And hail the friend of justice, truth, and right !
E'en slaves would feel their chains, and blush with shame,
And with one loud united voice exclaim,
" Behold the man in whose capacious mind,
Philanthropy and justice were combin'd ;
And though obscure, embarrass'd and distress'd,
The flame of heavenly truths glow'd in his breast.
Nor could the want of patrons, wealth, and fame,
Quench for a moment that eternal flame !
All nature's laws he freely, clearly, scann'd,
And found the *summum bonum* in the land !
And show'd that justice planted in the earth,
Gave man new rights and liberty new birth ;
And form'd a plan, on the Agrarian scheme,
Which we, grown wise, know now to be no dream."

That man, that honest man, was Thomas Spence !
Whose genius, judgment, wit, and manly sense,
Confounded all the dogmas of the schools,
And prov'd that statesmen are but learned fools ;
That priests preach future worlds of pain and bliss,
To cheat the weak, and rob the poor in this !
Or else their practice and their cry would be,
" *Let all be equal, and let all be free !*"

The above elegy was written by the author of the " Life of Spence," soon after the death of that good and honest man, and recited at the last anniversary of Mr. Spence's birth-day, held at the Navy Coffee-house, Catherine-street, Strand, 1819.

P R E F A C E.

AT a time, when almost every nation in the world is in a state of anarchy and confusion, created by the unnatural, unjust, and cruel systems which an artificial state of society has called into existence ;—at a time, when the extremes of wealth and poverty are corrupting and destroying the population of the earth ;—at a time, when the rich are enacting laws to coerce the people, so severe, that the latter, having no other alternative, are compelled to violate those laws, to preserve their very existence ;—at a time, when trifling and partial reforms are only facilitating the progress of a violent revolution ;—at such a time, the details of a PLAN, the adoption of which would not only consolidate the government, and give peace and plenty to the people, but would give, also, a bond of security to property, which no future tyranny could dissolve,—cannot possibly be unacceptable to the present generation of mankind.

We have seen many physical revolutions, and some moral or legal reforms ; yet none of these changes have put a single extra loaf of bread into the cupboard of the poor man. But in the reform which is here proposed, all the advantages will be, as they ought, on the side of the working man. He would not only enjoy the whole fruits of his industry, UNTAXED, but an equal share, in every respect, of the elements and spontaneous productions of nature also. Neither change of character, custom, or habit, would be necessary for an individual to become a partaker of the

PREFACE.

benefits and blessings of this great plan of political justice, natural right, and national salvation. Nor would greater confusion arise under this agrarian system than is observed among the fundholders, whose number, I believe, amounts to nearly 300,000. Among this great joint-stock company every thing goes on in harmony and peace; and would go on in the same peaceful manner, under the same system, if it were possible that the dividends arising from the interest of the £800,000,000 of national debt could be made to extend to every man, woman, and child in the British empire.

Every thing that is necessary to prepare the public mind for this great CUPBOARD REVOLUTION, or agrarian reform, contained in this truly philanthropic system, will be found in the following pages.

All eyes are on, all hopes are in the press,
Let THAT be free, and who can doubt success?

ALLEN DAVENPORT.

5, Moor Lane, London,
June, 1836.

THE LIFE OF THOMAS SPENCE.

THOMAS SPENCE, one of the most profound thinkers and correct reasoners on the rights of man in a state of society, that the world ever produced, was born at Newcastle-upon-Tyne, a little before the revolutionary war of America. His father was a humble artizan, by trade a shoemaker, consequently the education of Thomas was upon a very limited scale; but, being endowed with strong natural powers of mind, assisted by the pains which his father took in exercising it, and giving his mental faculties a right direction, our author raised himself to an eminence in the republic of letters, which, while it excited the admiration of some, and envy of others, ultimately attracted the attention of all.

The method which Mr. Spence, who was an admirer of the Sacred Scriptures, employed to instruct his son was this; he made little Thomas daily read portions of the Bible, New Testament, and other historical and philosophical works, while he sat at his work: and he, after every reading, obliged his son to repeat what he had read, in the best manner he could, by heart; and to put his own construction on the meaning of the different parts of the same. Where he had drawn an improper inference, or come to a wrong conclusion, he was set right, to the best of his father's abilities: and when it was found that he had discovered the correct view and intention of his author, he was encouraged by a corresponding commendation. Thus led on, step by step, under this simple but effectual method of instruction, young Spence made a rapid progress in the knowledge of human nature, of the elements of society, and of both ancient and modern national policy. By such means did the subject of this Memoir acquire every qualification that was necessary to form the statesman and the legislator. But alas! he was poor; and the simplicity of his manners, the inflexibility of his mind, and the incorruptibility of his heart, were not the qualities to enable a man, under the present system, to ascend very high in the scale of opulence and power. He has, however, in spite of every disadvantage, produced a spark of truth which all the despots in the world will be unable to tread out; for all the water that they may pour upon it from their state engines, instead of extinguishing it, will, like oil poured on the fire, make it burn the fiercer, and increase its extent. He has laid the foundation-stone;

and, though the builders may for a season overlook it, or despise it, the superstructure of civilized society must ultimately be raised upon it, or we must relinquish the hope of seeing the population of any nation upon the earth free, prosperous, and happy.

Mr. Spence was unfortunate in the choice of a partner, who turned out to be a star whose malefic influence not only marred his peace of mind, and defeated many of his good intentions, but obstructed in some degree the progress of his plans for the general improvement of the condition of mankind. So much was she the termagant, that he often compared himself to Socrates, who was cursed during his life with the scolding Xantippe! Nor was the ancient sage disgraced in any respect by the comparison; for, like him, in spite of every obstacle that could be raised against him or his system; in spite of the prosecutions of the great and powerful, the ridicule of the witty, and the loud idiotic laugh of the ignorant and unreflecting of his own class, our modern philosopher persevered in the sacred cause of truth, justice, and liberty.

In the early part of his life, and during his stay at Newcastle, Mr. Spence kept a school for the instruction of youth, for which office he was remarkably well qualified, on account of his gentle disposition, his extensive knowledge of human nature, and his correct notions of the rights of man. During the period he was so employed, a law-suit took place between the corporation and the freemen of Newcastle, about the right of possessing the rent of a part of the town moor, or common-field, which had been enclosed to the exclusion of the freemen. It was decided in favour of the freemen at the assizes, and that the rent of the enclosure should be equally divided among the freemen. This division of rent, together with the whole circumstances of the case, inspired Mr. Spence with new ideas in regard to landed property, and was, in fact, the original cause that produced the Spencean System.* Some time after

* This law-suit arose in the following manner, viz. :—The officers of the corporation having enclosed part of the town-moor, and converted it into farms, let those farms for an annual rent. The freemen took it into their heads, that, as the common-field was their property, they must have an equal right to the rent of the farms; they therefore sent a deputation to the mayor and council, to demand an account of the proceeds: these officers laughed at the deputation for setting up such a claim, and refused to render any account, upon which the freemen brought their action to recover the money, which suit was decided in their favour at the assizes; and ever since that time the rent has been at the disposal of the freemen, who, very much to their credit, have expended it in charitable purposes.—This decision, in favour of the freemen of Newcastle, was followed by an action-at-law on the part of the freemen of Durham, where the same circumstances of enclosing and en-

this occurrence, Mr. Spence became a member of the Newcastle Philosophical Society. One of the conditions of this society was, that every new member should give a lecture on some branch of science or philosophy: Mr. Spence seized on this opportunity, and delivered his introductory lecture "On the mode of Administering the Landed Estate of the Nation as a Joint-stock Property, in Parochial Partnerships, by dividing the Rent." This lecture was patronised by Dr. Murray, a reverend and learned divine, and much approved of by many other learned and philanthropic individuals, at whose suggestions he was prevailed on to send it into the world through the medium of the press. This act of publishing, and stating it to have been delivered before the Philosophical Society, and the great attention which was paid to it by the public, created many powerful enemies against the then novel theory of Mr. Spence, and some of the influential individuals of the town became his persecutors. He was expelled the Philosophical Society, under the pretence that he had made use of their name without their consent. Means were also employed to prevent the children from attending his school; and other low and mean contrivances were adopted, not only to blast his rising reputation, but, if possible, to deprive him of the very means of subsistence.

Finding himself thus critically situated, persecuted by the selfish and interested, and misunderstood by the ignorant and prejudiced of all parties, he left Newcastle and repaired to London, in order to try the success of his system in a city where political science and liberal principles were cultivated to a great extent by the Corresponding and other Societies, which then existed in the metropolis.

Mr. Spence made his *debut* in London in the character of a very humble bookseller, not being able at the beginning to command more than a book-stall, which he kept at the corner of Chancery-lane, Holborn, where he began publishing his

grossing the common, or moor, had been resorted to by the members of the corporation, for private emolument, as at Newcastle. The freemen of this city also obtained a verdict against the officers of the corporation, at the assizes; but, notwithstanding this decision, the corporation were determined, if possible, to retain their public plunder, and by moving the suit from one court to another, and obtaining new trials, they put the freemen to the enormous expense of £70,000, before they were finally compelled to surrender the rent of the farms to the freemen; and had it not been for a public-spirited individual, who lent the freemen the money to carry on the suit, it never could have been recovered. The freemen repaid the money thus advanced, with interest, out of the arrears due to them by the corporation, from the proceeds of these farms, and have ever since divided the rent half-yearly amongst the resident freemen, amounting to about £10 each per annum.

plan in small tracts, some as low as a halfpenny : he also had medals struck in copper, which briefly explained the nature of his system. About 1793, he removed to a small shop in Little Turnstile, Holborn, where he published a periodical work, in penny numbers, entitled "Pigs' Meat," containing selections from ancient and modern authors, on political and philosophical subjects. This publication had a great sale, the essays being exceedingly well selected. It ran through two volumes ; it is now out of print and scarce. In the year 1794, when Messrs. Hardy, Tooke, and Thelwall, were tried at the Old Bailey, on a charge of constructive treason, Mr. Spence was arrested with others, and confined in Newgate during the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act. During his confinement, he amused himself by writing tracts and songs ; all of which were explanatory of the principles of his fellowship in the land. On his liberation, he got a small shop, No. 9, Oxford-street, where he continued publishing as he had done before, and striking his copper medals, and circulating them amongst his friends and customers, till the year 1798, when he was again arrested, under the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act, and confined in the House of Correction, Coldbath-fields ; but, obtaining his release after two or three examinations, he preserved his shop, and continued his former pursuits till the year 1801, when he was prosecuted for a libel, by the Attorney-General, Mr. Law, afterwards Lord Ellenborough. The publication on which the charge was founded, was a series of letters on his plan, entitled "The Restorer of Society to its Natural State." He was tried at Westminster, before Lord Kenyon and a Special Jury.

The trial excited much interest, as he defended himself, and read the whole work in his defence ; commenting, as he proceeded, upon the just, benevolent, and humane principles which it contained. The Jury, notwithstanding, found him guilty, and he was sentenced to be imprisoned for 12 months in Shrewsbury gaol ; to pay a fine of 20*l.* to the King ; and to be further imprisoned in default thereof : though his judges must have been aware that he did not at that time possess twenty shillings. But Mr. Spence was released from the operation of the fine, by a subscription amongst his friends and disciples ; and on his liberation, commenced business as a number carrier, and dealer in books generally. During this period, he published his trial, which contained the whole work for which he had suffered a long and dreary imprisonment.

The last work he brought out was entitled the *Giant Killer*, a weekly publication, price fourpence, of which only three numbers appeared ; as he died suddenly, of a bowel complaint, in September 1814, at his lodgings in Castle-street, Oxford.

street, somewhat more than sixty years of age, forty of which he had devoted to the cause of justice and humanity. He was ever solicitous for the happiness of mankind in general: but it was the working man—the producer of all the necessaries, comforts, and luxuries of human life—who was nearest his heart. It was for the political redemption of the poor, that he braved the hatred, the malice, and the terrible vengeance of the rich and powerful, while he lived; and chose rather to die in indigence and rags than renounce the plan of political salvation, which he conceived to be capable of redeeming the world from the misery, the degradation, and the cannibal-like oppression, with which it has so long been, and still continues to be, afflicted.

This great, though poor man, was buried with some pomp by his disciples, in the burial-ground, Tottenham-court Road. About forty of them attended the funeral, and to testify their sense of the uprightness of his intentions to serve mankind with sincerity and truth, they carried the scales, as the emblem of justice, immediately after the corpse, containing an equal quantity of earth in each scale, the balance being decorated with white ribbons, to denote the innocence of his life and example; his medals were distributed to the crowd as they passed along; many medals were thrown into the grave; and a funeral oration was pronounced over the body, when it was interred, by Mr. William Snow, in which he expatiated at great length and with considerable eloquence on the merits of the deceased; showing, in a clear and comprehensive manner, the benefits that would accrue, not only to the working classes, but, morally speaking, to the whole human race, by the adoption of his system.

The system of this truly-honest man, which, in honour of its author, is entitled “the Spencean System,” is a proposition founded on the inalienable rights of man; wherein the premises are laid down, that all men are equal in the eyes of God and Justice, and are entitled to an equal participation in the elements of nature; that the land, from which every thing that is necessary to preserve animal existence is extracted, is as much the property of one individual as of another; and that, as the air we breathe is free to all, the land ought to be equally free; and that, until this concession be made by the great lords of the soil, and the people put in possession, and secured by law in the enjoyment of this their natural inheritance, there can be no such thing as political justice in the world.

Before I enter further into the principles of this agrarian fellowship, or parochial partnership, I will here introduce a statement which Mr. Spence very properly selected to illus-

trate his plan, and to serve as a model for a larger scale, and which is an extract from *Nichols's History of Leicestershire*. In this History, we find a particular account of the parish of Little Dalby, communicated by Professor Martin, in which he says the number of houses is 21; families, 22; and the whole population, 123. Labourers have in summer, 1s. 2d. per day; in winter, 1s.; in harvest, 1s. 6d. The net expenss of the poor in 1776, were 27l. 16s., and the whole rent was 1,422l. per annum. Thus, we find that this little parish, like others, contains several sorts and conditions of men—as landlords and tenants, farmers and labourers, paupers, &c.; and therefore, may be as proper to apply the principles of this system, as any. Suppose, then, that this system should be adopted, let us see how the inhabitants of Little Dalby would be affected.

First.—The effect the system would have, must be the rendering all lands, rivers, mines, coal-pits, houses, &c. within the parish boundary the common stock of all the inhabitants, including the families of the landlords, whether one or more, who, as such, become extinct; and if they remained, instead of being idle drones, would be converted into useful citizens; which change I should think must of necessity afford the greatest amount of happiness and prosperity to the greatest number of the parishioners, and if carried out into a national system, to the people at large.

Secondly.—Another set of drones, though not so expensive, I mean the poor, on whom the 27l. 16s. is bestowed, would, as paupers, become extinct, and the money levied for them saved, as will be seen hereafter.

Thirdly.—As it is improbable Mr. Martin should reckon the houses and land in occupation of the landlords in his rent-roll, we may safely suppose such to be worth at least £100 a-year, and then the rents will be 1,522l.

Fourthly.—If we suppose the administering the affairs of government under such a system to be cheap, a land-tax, or per centage on the parish rent-roll of 4s. in the pound, may be deemed not very inadequate to its expenditure.

These things being premised, we shall soon see whether the people of Little Dalby, and the nation at large, have reason to be sorry or to rejoice at the establishment of such a system:—

The whole rent of the parish, including the premises of the landlords, &c. would amount to	£1,522	0	0
Yielding to the State, at 4s. in the pound.	304	9	0
Leaving to be divided equally among the 123 inhabitants of every description, men, women, and children, as the profit of their natural inheritance or estate	1,217	16	0
The individual share of which is something above	9	18	0

The above statement is so simple, so clear, and so comprehensible, that comment is almost unnecessary; but the follow-

ing observations of Mr. Spence himself are so pertinent and so replete with plain sense and honest reasoning, that every true philanthropist will read them with admiration and delight.

"Here, then," says our author, "we find by this statement of Little Dalby, that after a large sum is remitted to government, men, women, and children, of every description, share equally near ten pounds each, unincumbered with taxes of any kind, tolls, or poor-rates! Was there ever such a prospect of happiness held out to the contemplation of mankind? Who, on such an occasion, will make up a lamentation for the landed interest—the remains of the Paganism of antiquity? Will our grandees insist upon remaining in their present state of misery? Must we still have tragedies acted on the stage, to draw forth our sympathy for their unparalleled sufferings? Nay, ought they not themselves, upon due consideration, to be the first to lead up the philanthropic dance of human happiness, rather than risk what has befallen the nobles and priests of France, driven out of their country for their misdeeds by a furious political revolution. 'Come, then, let us reason together.' Let us take an impartial view of the effect which such a revolution as I propose would produce on the different orders of mankind.

First—In respect to the landlords of every degree; are they the most happy of the human race, either in their amours, marriages, family connexions, health, &c.? Does not the pride of birth and family act the inexorable tyrant over their most tender feelings? Does it not destroy love, and friendship, and dissolve the ties of blood, by unnaturally erecting one of the brood of children into a lordly tyrant? Nay, their whole economy among themselves, in regard to one another, is a system of violence to nature, to justice, and to humanity. What kind of treatment, then, must mankind expect from a combination of such unnatural monsters? What, then, will be the fate or feelings of this class, under such an order of things as that proposed? Why, they will, from insatiable, proud, jealous, and unhappy victims to gaudy bondage, become wealthy, industrious families, and happy citizens. They will also bring up their children to useful habits and employments; and teach them to look upon every son and daughter of the human race as brethren and equals. They will still be the most wealthy, as they will retain all their moveable property, as well as their shares in the revenues arising from the land, which will then be the **COMMON FARM OF THE PEOPLE**. Let us leave them, then, to their happy lot, and contemplate the cases of the other classes.

Secondly—Of the farmers, merchants, and master mechanics. We know that if these have any landed property, their possessions would be sunk in the common stock, of which they

and their families would become joint proprietors, and it would, in general, be a change to their advantage. The universal abolition of taxes, and the regular return of their family dividends, would also be an eternal prop and spur to their industry, and enable them to sell their respective produce and merchandize at such low prices, as to ensure both a very extensive foreign and domestic trade. Would not reflections arising from this, be a consolation, and remove from the minds of tradesmen a gloomy cloud of apprehensions?

Thirdly—The labouring classes, both mechanics and agricultural labourers, would be, as they ought, those that would benefit most by such a change. The abolition of taxes, from which scarcely anything is exempt, and which enormously enhance the price of every article they consume, would render all things incalculably cheaper; for, as all things which society now possesses are the produce of labour, it is labour alone that pays taxes, and provides the means of support for every member of society: *the labourer, therefore, is the first proprietor of every thing in art and nature*; and all that the idle enjoy, they get by taking from the labourer, either by force or fraud: and as the labourers would receive their dividends of rent, according to the number of their households, they would be able now and then to be hospitable to one another, to entertain a friend, to relax a little from incessant toil, to appear clean and decent in their apparel, and comfortable in their habitations, to educate their children; in a word, to be respectable and happy citizens. Such as aspired to become masters, would have an opportunity to save money for that purpose: it would not be then, as now, *once a pauper, always a pauper*: no, no, there would be a possibility of rising again. They would not then have the gloomy prospect of bringing up their children to be prostitutes, thieves, soldiers, and sailors; nor would these latter occupations be of the degrading character they are now, as the dividends of soldiers and sailors, while serving their country abroad, would be accumulating to provide a fund when they returned and were discharged, to put them into some way of trade; then, the incentive to vice being removed, the morals of all classes must wonderfully improve in a happy state of mediocrity.

Finally—How would young people of both sexes be affected by such a state of things? Would young men be the worse for 10*l.* a year, to keep them in decent clothes during an apprenticeship, or as premiums to their masters; or, when out of their time, to buy a stock of tools; or, if they should think of marriage, would money be of no use in purchasing furniture and a hundred different things that could be enumerated? And as it regards the fair sex, would it have any pernicious effect upon them? Would they be worse educated, worse

clothed, or imbibe meaner sentiments, through having something of their own to manage? Would it not beget in them an early bias to the management of the concerns of domestic life, and remove from their minds the inducements to yield to the temptations and snares by which they are now surrounded—from the alluring baits spread for their ruin by the depravity and contaminating power and influence of wealth? No, no; these points are not to be controverted. What, then, you evil-minded, you sticklers for old vices, old miseries, old corruptions, old tyrannies, old pollutions, old says, and old saws, what have you to object, either in theory or practice? Speak out, what is it you have to say, now is the time? Oh! there is an objection. Though Little Dalby would share 10*l*. a head yearly, yet many parishes that have a greater population and less land, would share less, and the expenses of the parish would sometimes consume nearly, if not all, the rent, in public works and jobs, and the people would get no dividends. Answer: Public expense would be entirely under public controul; care would be taken that it should be neither enormous nor wasteful; and at the worst, their rentals would be equal to all public exigencies, if it did not leave a surplus to be dealt back again to the people. But that is not the objection—that is not what is meant—in such a case, the rich must go without, as well as the poor. The real objection is, that it does not make an exclusion in favour of the higher orders, that *they* may receive at all times, and under all circumstances, and the poor only be doomed to privations.

But we have not yet considered what means there may be, or what improvements may be made in the soil, or what timber there may be to fell, or what fisheries they may possess, and a variety of local advantages, peculiar to almost every parish, that would be turned to account if the whole of the inhabitants had an interest in making them valuable. No, no; this is the grand consolation on one side, and a stumbling-block of objection on the other. They—the public—would have no *taxes to pay*: consequently, the rich, or higher orders, *would have none to receive, to distribute among themselves, their relations, and dependants*. In a word, this is the only system that can make the world worth living in, by rendering it free, moral, enlightened, and happy; and, therefore, it is ratsbane to rogues, more particularly to rich rogues.

A smattering of the rights of man has now pervaded all nations, and rendered them very unhappy. The rich know not what to fear, and the poor know not how far their rights extend, or how far they are practicable. This is the time, then, for intelligent minds to employ themselves on this grand object. Imperfect systems will not long resist the reiterated

attacks of truth. The dark ages can never return. Wherefore, then, should we prolong anarchy by childishly resisting the growing empire of reason? When a person sits down as a philosopher to the study of any science or branch of knowledge, he should certainly do so as much unconcerned about the issue of the investigation, with respect to the interest of himself, or any party, or class of men, as an upright judge sits down to hear a cause, or a schoolboy to work a question in arithmetic; and dare any say that we shall not sit down to politics in the same manner? This is the most likely way to arrive at the truth, and to become adepts in the science we aim at; surely, you would not confine your pupil in arithmetic or mathematics to such a result of your problem, whether in truth it would be so according to rule and right reason? Nor oblige a judge to make up his mind on the determination of a case before he heard it? If, then, we are not to sit down to politics in the same state of mind as to our other studies, for God's sake, I say, speak out, and tell us to which side we are to incline, at the expense of truth. I say, are we, at the expense of our own sacred rights and interest, to do violence to truth in favour of cannibals? Are we to determine, right or wrong, that we and our children *shall and ought to be less in the scale of animal beings than worms and caterpillars?* Shall we say that Indians have an indisputable right to hunt, fish, graze, &c., and that civilized man can be entirely disinherited of his natural property without an equivalent? Being so rich and equal in a state of nature, do we shrink into abject, servile poverty, and forfeit our title to all our abundance of national wealth and liberty the moment we join civilized society? Detested be the mode of education that would induce us to believe so! Sophists, come forward! Speak out, and tell us by what means you have acquired the right to dictate to the least of your fellow-men how they are to study the sciences—the chief of the sciences—the science of the rights of mankind! Tell us, whether we shall study with the unprejudiced minds of untainted youth, or with the determined, mercenary, warped, sophistry of our critical literati? Shall we, you leaders of the blind, study with a Pitt and a Burke out of office, or with a Pitt and a Burke in office? As nature is the same, let who-soever dominate, so are the truths deducible from nature; and whenever I study, let who will reign, it shall be to discover the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, *so help me God!* Wherefore, having discharged my duty to mankind, in pointing out, to the best of my apprehension, the only means by which they can be made happy, I hold myself guiltless, and leave it to their choice to be *free or enslaved, independent or influenced, to consume their own productions, or give them to the thankless.*”

And now, reader, lest it should be thought that I presume too much on human authority, let us see what the Scriptures say on this important subject. In Leviticus, chap. 25, verse xxiii. God says decisively, *the land shall not be sold for ever.*—How does this tally with the title deeds of our freeholders, which say, “yours, for ever and ever!” When was this law of God repealed? In another part of the Scriptures we are told, that God gave the earth to the children of men; and, as if the Prophet foresaw that this declaration might be disputed by the lords of the soil, he repeats the divine command, and gives it such an interpretation, that knaves cannot misconstrue, nor fools misunderstand; for he says, *God gave it (the earth) to mankind in common.* Here, then, there can be no mistake; the only question to be decided is, which is right, the Bible, or the landlord’s *title-deeds*? This declaration is so clear and intelligible, that no person who sincerely believes the Sacred Scriptures, will attempt to deny that one man has as much right to the land, in its wild state, at least, as another; therefore, it follows as a matter of course that the earth, like the other elements of nature, was designed by Providence to be the common property of mankind, through every generation of the human race.

But here the question arises, how is this great social revolution to be brought about? To which I reply, Do the people wish it? If they do, nothing but a declaration of that wish is necessary; perhaps I shall be better understood, if I construct the circle, and give the details of the plan for reducing the theory to practice, on a small community.

Let us, then, take a single parish, the whole land of which belongs to one sole landlord (there are many instances of this in England), to whom, of course, all the rents are to be paid; well, the people are become enlightened, and, consequently, dissatisfied with things as they are; they demand their right in the soil; the demand is refused; what is to be done? All the parishioners unite, take Archdeacon Paley in the one hand, and the Bible in the other; assemble in an adjoining field, and after having discussed the subject to their own satisfaction, enter into a convention, and unanimously agree to a declaration of rights, in which it is declared that all the land, including coal-pits, mines, rivers, &c., belonging to the parish of *Bees*, now in the possession of *Lord Drone*, shall, on Lady-day, the 25th March, 18—, become public property, the joint stock, and common farm, in which every parishioner shall enjoy an equal participation. The same declaration to serve as a notice to *Lord Drone* to quit possession, and to give up all right and title to all the land, &c. he has hitherto possessed, to the people of the said parish of *Bees*, on or before the above

mentioned day, for ever. And it may be further declared, that on Midsummer-day ensuing, all the rents arising from the lands, mines, rivers, coal-pits, &c. belonging to the said parish, instead of being paid, as heretofore, into the hands of *Lord Drone* or his steward, shall be paid into the hands of a parish committee or board of directors, who may be appointed for that purpose, after being duly elected by a respectable majority of the whole parish; and that after the national, provincial, and parochial governments are provided for out of the rents thus collected, the remainder may be divided into equal shares among all the parishioners, men, women, and children, including Lord and Lady *Drone*, and all the little *Drones* belonging to their family; and the like division to be made on every succeeding quarter-day for ever.

This grand system of reform is so simple, so just, and so efficacious, that not the least confusion would arise from its operation. It is the only plan that has ever been discovered capable of regulating itself upon general principles. If in such a community there should be more births than deaths, the dividends would be less; when there were more deaths than births, the dividends would be more. In like manner it would regulate itself in every other respect.

Now, who would be the sufferers in this glorious change? Surely none. For even the loss which my Lord and Lady *Drone* would have to deplore would be more imaginary than real, as my Lord would still have, beside his quarterly dividend, all his ready cash, his horses and carriages, plate, furniture, and all other moveables. His lady would retain her splendid wardrobe, her blazing jewellery, library of choice novels, cabinet of curiosities, &c. &c., so that they might still be the most wealthy people in the community.

The greatest wound they would receive would be in their pride; and it is pride, above all other things, that shuts against the rich man the gates of heaven. So that this system, by providing for the poor, and placing them above temptation, would cause poverty and crime so to diminish that workhouses and prisons would be rendered unnecessary; while, on the other hand, the rich would be restrained by the limitation of their means from indulging in that luxury and debauchery which destroy their health in this world, and endanger their happiness in the next.

I am aware that the lords of the soil would call such a measure robbery. But I appeal to justice and humanity whether it would not be better to take away the usurped property of one to make thousands of poor miserable beings comfortable, than to ruin thousands, which is the practice under the present system, to make one rich?

Thus, then, might two deadly national diseases, which have been hitherto considered incurable—namely, the poor man's poverty and the rich man's gout, be cured by one single legislative enactment. The thing might be done, according to Dr. Paley, when the occasion shall deserve it, by the *interposition of the people*. But as I am a lover of peace, order, and good government, I had much rather see the thing brought about by legal means. It is perfect insanity in legislators to think of going on much longer in the present style of legislation. The legal, moral, and social movements have commenced, and no power on earth will be able to arrest its progress, till every thing that is feudal, exclusive, and unnatural, shall be banished from the world.

Adopt this Agrarian system, and the odious names of tax, tithe, toll and custom, will be heard of no more. Agriculture, manufacture, commerce, and every description of trade, would flourish beyond all precedent, while the commerce of every other country, which did not adopt the same system, would be ruined in every market wherever an English merchant should land his goods, by the reduced prices of his untaxed commodities. The mechanic would learn to feel that importance to which his ingenious powers entitle him in the ranks of society; the pride of independence would again animate the breast of the peasant; the disgraceful name of pauper would no longer be known; and charitable institutions would cease to proclaim the degradation of the people. Such a nation of *Bees* would be able to collect the sweets of every country in the world without the fear of being robbed of their honey; for woe to those who should attempt to plunder their hive.

Having hitherto reviewed this excellent system upon a small scale, I will now, in order to give the reader a clear insight into the propositions, take a short view of the effect their adoption would have upon the nation at large, as regards its financial affairs, &c.

Perhaps it is almost impossible to obtain a correct account of the amount of the rents of all the lands, mines, fisheries, coal-pits, houses, &c. in the three kingdoms; but let us suppose the whole to amount to 100,000,000*l.* sterling, then let us see how the expenditure will stand, after a certain division shall be made among the different classes of the community.

YEARLY EXPENDITURE.

For the Crown, in expenses of the Court, great officers of state, army, navy, ordnance, dock-yards, &c.....	£15,000,000
For the House of Lords, and nobility, in pensions for their services.....	3,000,000
For the Clergy of all denominations, in lieu of tithes, &c.....	3,000,000

For the House of Commons, as agents or attorneys for the public	£1,000,000
For public institutions, national education, universities, colleges, schools, hospitals, &c.	2,000,000
For inns and courts of law, salaries of judges, and other legal officers	1,000,000
For county-rates of assizes, quarter sessions, harbours, bridges, roads, &c.	7,000,000
For parish charges	7,000,000
And, for indemnities, by way of annuities, to individuals or associations, for losses sustained in the surrender of landed or funded property, not comprised in the class of nobility or pensioners	12,000,000

Total Outlay £51,000,000

Leaving a clear annual balance of £43,000,000, to be equally divided to every man, woman, and child; which, among 24,000,000 of people, would be more than two pounds a head yearly, after providing, in the most extravagant manner, for every national expense, without tax, toll, or custom. Surely this is enough to open the eyes of the working classes, and to induce them, instead of pursuing delusive objects, to turn the whole of their attention to the principles of agrarian equality contained in this system; for, until this system is adopted, all other Reforms are merely as building castles in the air—a waste of time. The working classes have had their co-operative trading associations, labour exchanges, and other speculations, which have all completely failed. And why did they fail? because they had not land and agriculture for their basis; without which, no contrivance, no ingenuity, could force the *labour notes* into general circulation, or make them reach the provision merchant, the farmer, and the land-owner. The author of this work wrote several letters to Mr. Owen during his governorship, clearly pointing out how the system of labour exchange would work; and predicting that which has since been but too closely verified, namely, that all such schemes, not having the necessary foundation, must inevitably end in a failure. Alas! the bridge over which we were to arrive at the promised land is broken, and it does not appear that it can be repaired.

Subsequently, all our hopes centered in the Trades' Unions! My heart overflowed with joy, when I beheld those dense masses of men assembled in Copenhagen fields; for then I saw clearly, that there was in the country a sufficient power gathered up, that would, if properly directed, have brought about such reforms as would save the country from foreign intrigues, and put the working classes in the possession of all their natural and civil rights! But when I saw the six unionists of Dorchester transported for seven years! my heart trembled within me. What! exclaimed I, mentally,

can two millions of men, all sworn to be brothers, suffer six of their members to be thus cruelly torn from their body, amidst the sobs and tears of their distracted families! The six poor men were transported! To have prevented which, nothing was necessary but a simultaneous movement: had all the unionists assembled in their respective towns and cities on the same day, and demanded, with a voice of thunder, the release of their six brothers, I can scarcely believe that the government would have resisted such a demand. At any rate, the poor men ought to have been rescued, though it had been at the expense of a *trial of strength*!

I sincerely hope the Unions will profit by experience, and direct their future attention to some clear and tangible object; and, I think no object can be more worthy of their attention, than that foundation of all useful reforms—the glorious system of Thomas Spence.

One of the greatest beauties of this system, if adopted, would be, that such a commonwealth could never be invaded with any chance of success by a foreign army. The whole population of the country having part and parcel in the land, men, women, and children,—at the first alarm, would fly to arms, and present such impenetrable phalanxes to the invader, that his defeat and ultimate destruction would be inevitable. Every house would be fortified; every street, lane, and public road, would be intersected; trees would be felled, trenches would be sunk, and everything that ingenuity could invent, and bravery achieve, would be opposed to the enemy. Such a people would rush on to certain destruction, and prefer one common grave, beneath the ruins of their country, rather than submit to the interference and dictation of either foreign or native tyrants. If the bare proclaiming of liberty and equality in France could arouse such a spirit in the French people as to enable them to dethrone and expel their royal tyrants, to drive from the country an arrogant and overbearing aristocracy, and successfully to defend themselves for more than 20 years against the repeated combinations of all the powers of Europe; falling at last only because they deviated from the principles they first proclaimed; what energy, what courage, what determination, would not be found among a people who had the sense to possess themselves of their rights and liberties, by planting the standard of justice in the earth, and enjoying all the glorious benefits arising from an Agrarian equality! The spirit which would animate such a people, in case of invasion, may be compared to that which animates the breast of a peasant if one of the houses of his village should happen to be on fire; every villager, the moment the alarm should be given, would load himself with water, and hasten

to the spot with all possible speed, to endeavour to arrest the rage of those devouring flames, which would, perhaps, if not extinguished, not only reduce his neighbour's house, but the whole village, to ashes. Such a people would be so wedded to their country, that on such an occasion all *self* would be lost in the glorious blaze of *social* love.

The people are justified in demanding the adoption of this system, if it were only on account of the many innovations and encroachments made upon them by the landowners, who alone make the laws; for without possessing what is called a freehold estate, no man, on any pretence whatever, can be a legislator. And all the laws which have been made and enforced for the last hundred and fifty years have been so framed that the natural consequence has been that all the lands, houses, &c. in this country, are now incorporated in the little kingdoms of the nobility of the moneyed aristocracy, to the total exclusion of both the king and the people.

Previous to the revolution of 1688, the King of England was, perhaps, the greatest landowner in the empire; but when the grasping Whigs, instead of appealing to the energies of the people,—by which they might have established a government and an executive power, that would have prevented nearly all the miseries and privations to which the people in general, and the working classes in particular, have been subjected ever since that notable event,—sent over to Holland for an ignorant Dutchman,—(I say ignorant, for what could he know about the language, habits, customs, and genius of the people of England?)—this was the very thing the Whigs of that day wanted; they wanted not a King, but a mere tool, in whose name they could subject the country to their own ambitious views. Of this they soon gave ocular demonstration; for, on finding their new King fully in their power, they, in order to keep him so, deprived him of all those landed estates which had been enjoyed by his predecessors from time immemorial, and reduced him to the situation of a servant or hireling, allowing him an annual salary to defray the necessary expenses of his house and court. Not content with the confiscation of the Crown lands, which they divided among themselves (for some of which they do not, perhaps, pay more than fourpence or sixpence an acre), they in this greedy fit seized on part of the church lands also; and Woburn Abbey, with its vast domains, and other noblemen's estates, are existing monuments of the frauds and robberies of the Whigs of 1688. —And have we not now damning proofs of the care and solicitude with which the principles of that revolution have been cherished and acted upon by their worthy descendants, the

Whigs of the present day? But all these transactions, base and audacious as they were, are nothing when compared with the robberies committed on the poor, by the laws for inclosing the moorlands and common fields; by which, during the last century, the poor have been robbed of millions of acres of land, to which their title was more just and natural than that of any private landowner in the kingdom; for, as well as having the sanction of a hundred ages, it had the common consent of all mankind, except that of the ruffians who committed the robbery!

The common fields to which the people have an imprescriptible right, like what remains of the church lands, could not be subjected to will and testament, as is the case with the estates of the nobility, which are subject to unjust, unnatural, and brutal laws of primogeniture, which bind down the whole of the estates to the eldest son, to the exclusion of all the other children, be they ever so many, who are generally thrown on the public, and provided for out of the taxes, every farthing of which is wrung from the labour of the working people. So long as the common fields remained in the possession of the people, the principle of the people's right in the soil was recognized, and the natural rights of man, though in a very slight degree, remained in existence. But these being now almost all incorporated in the dominions of the Aristocracy, we have nothing to refer to but the church lands, which are the lasting evidence of the right of the people to a participation in the land which gave them birth, and [which should be as free as the air we breathe, to the whole population of the earth, since it is as necessary to our existence as the other elements—the water and the air.

It may be thus clearly seen, from the tenure and method of management of the Church estate, that hereditary possession of the land by individuals, as private property, is unnecessary. These lands are held after the manner of a community of property; they are not restricted to any kind of heirship, but remain the common property of those who may be elected or appointed members of that particular community. This church system, though abused, and corrupted to the last degree, recognised the principle of **THE PEOPLE'S RIGHT TO THE LAND**, and remains a practical proof of my position, that private or individual property in the land, is at once unjust and unnatural.

Let the church then, divide the *rents* arising from its lands and houses, &c. into equal shares among all its members, and that *agrarian equality* of which I am the humble advocate will be seen in a clearer light than words can make it. And as the church lands, like the common fields of the poor, cannot be

bought and sold, this just and happy state would continue as long as such a church should remain in existence. Let, then, the church of England set the example, by adopting these just, humane, and benevolent principles, which would be an approximation to that true christian policy which was established by their primitive ancestors, when they exclaimed, "On this rock our church is built, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it!"

Whatever reforms, in the church of England, may be deemed necessary to purify and equalize that corrupted establishment, let us hope, that we shall never see any change in the tenure of holding the church lands, until the period shall arrive for the great agrarian revolution; which must, sooner or later, inevitably take place. Instead of appropriating the church lands to the service of the state, as has in some instances been recommended, I should prefer to see such a reform as would restore to the church the land and property of which she has been despoiled by the impropriation system. Out of 10,693 parishes, no fewer than 3,845 are called impropriations; that is to say, in these parishes, the greatest part of the tithes, and other property belonging to the church, is in the hands of laymen. In more than one third of all the parishes in England, laymen take the greatest part of the property, without rendering the least service to either church or state!

It ought to have been the foundation of a great church reform, to restore to the church everything which belongs to her; to cut down the incomes of the bishops and rich parsons, to 500*l.* or 600*l.* a-year, and then let all the surplus arising from the tithes* and other church revenues, be applied to the education of the rising generation, to the comforting of the afflicted, and the support of the aged and infirm poor. For such purposes as these it was, that a part of the revenue of the church was originally reserved.

In order to try the important question of the people's right to the land; let us appeal to natural justice, and see how the matter stands in that point of view. It has been observed, that *right*, in an artificial state like that in which we live, consists in common consent, of the laws of social compact. But

* Speaking of tithes, Eusebius delivers himself thus:—"If thou dost possess anything more than extreme necessity doth require, and do not help the needy, thou art a thief and a robber." And St. Augustine speaking on the same subject says, "We have no right to the tithes, or tithes, which belong to the poor, unless we do challenge to ourselves a property by some damnable usurpation." These passages from the fathers, show at once how far the church has strayed from its original purity, and how necessary it is that she should be restored to her pristine state.

common consent, or the laws of social compact, cannot consign the land to the hereditary keeping of 70,000 individuals, to the exclusion of a population of twenty-five millions! unless, indeed, the common consent be renewed every year. Now, as that is not the case, it is clear that all the landed possessions of the present landholders are nothing more nor less than usurpations, handed down to them by their plundering ancestors.

But even if the possession of the land as private property were confirmed by common consent, or by a majority of the present generation to the landholders, it would only hold good with the present possessors; because, in order to make it hereditary in their families, the common consent, or social compact, must be made hereditary also. Now, as no father can bind down his son to be a slave, after he himself ceases to exist, the natural consequence is, that, if the succeeding generation will not consent to renew the social compact, (an agreement to which their foolish ancestors had subscribed,) the land, according to both natural justice and civil right, must revert to its original proprietors, the public at large; unless the pretended heirs could get over the difficulty by proving the land to be a manufactured article, and that their ancestors actually made it!

It is a general remark, that all wealth is acquired by labour. In the first instance this is true; but the operations and energies of nature never ought to be lost sight of, if we wish fairly to understand our real condition in society, and to ascertain the full extent of our natural rights. In the manufacturing and commercial world, everything depends on industry alone; but in agriculture, nature performs a very prominent part. The moment a mechanic lays down his tools, every prospect of gain is suspended; nothing supplies his absence, to facilitate the conclusion of what he had began: while the man who possesses land, has only to put his grain into the ground and leave it to the creative hand of nature,—who will not fail in due time, by a mysterious operation, to raise it up and multiply it fifty or a hundred fold, with little or no assistance from the hand of the laborer. Indeed the advantages that accrue from the possession of land, are incalculable, for example:—an acre of land contains 4840 square yards; now, supposing that an acre of wheat were to be manufactured after the manner of artificial flowers; each square yard containing twenty stems of wheat, and allowing only one shilling per yard to the manufacturer, the sum would amount to 242*l.*; instead of which, this immense labour is performed by the energies of an invisible hand! I have known good pasture land in the west of England, produce a good crop of grass, year

after year, with scarcely any labour from any human being, until the crop was ready for the scythe. The same might be said of all sorts of fruit trees, &c. Is not nature the common mother of all mankind? And is not the earth the common field on which she incessantly labours to produce plenty for all, even for the noxious reptile? Nature is no respecter of persons, or of things; the hayband that encircles the peasant's hat, is as glorious in her eyes, as the ten-thousand-pound-diamond hatband that blazed round the head of the late Castle-reagh!

To resume, however: a reluctant acknowledgment of the people's right to a participation in the land, was made by the legislature in the 43rd year of the reign of Elizabeth, by the passing of the old poor laws. Those laws, which compelled the rich to provide for the poor and destitute, were extorted from the Queen, by the sufferings and clamourings of the poor; who had been driven from every refuge and asylum, by the destruction, in that and the previous reign, of the monasteries, and the confiscation of the church lands; a great portion of the revenue of which was set apart for the maintenance of the aged and infirm.

From this period, although the middle classes (who could but ill afford it), were compelled by law to contribute largely towards the maintenance of the poor, the great landowners and money mongers (who hate the poor from their very hearts,) always begrudged the wretched pittance which was doled out to the distressed with a sparing hand, by the parish overseer!—And as the number of the poor had considerably increased, owing to the oppressive exactions made upon the people, by a system of misrule and fiscal spoliation,—the pampered aristocracy watched every opportunity to shake off the burden altogether, and at length hit upon a plan, which they flatter themselves will ultimately bring about the grand consummation of all their murderous wishes!

This plan is embodied in the new poor law; which is founded on the horrid and disgusting principles promulgated by one of the lights of the church, *Parson Malthus*! and its framers and supporters could have no other end in view than *speculative murder*! According to this soul freezing decree, two or three millions of citizens, of the British empire, will be doomed to incarceration within the walls of district prisons, where they are to be treated, in nearly all respects, as the felons who are condemned to hard labour. What can this mean, but starvation? seeing that the Irish peasant, and the English peasant, too, in many instances, is reduced to a potatoe diet! And this is to be the lot of the seventh part of the population of the most wealthy and industrious nation upon the face of the whole

earth ! since no relief is to be allowed outside the walls of the Commissioners' bastiles !

The framers of this clause, doubtless, anticipate a great thinning of the population, by *starvation and suicide* ; thinking, as they naturally must, that no man having the means of self-destruction at his command, would submit to such misery and degradation, which every individual must otherwise unavoidably endure, when he shall be placed at the mercy of a trio of despots, and cut off from all appeal to the common law of the land ! If this be the wish of our brutal legislators, they are likely enough to have their cruel desires gratified ; for I have heard several individuals declare that they would rather perish than submit to such infamous treatment ; but at the same time they were resolved that, in such case, they would not go out of the world alone !

If we look at the bastardy clause, we clearly see murder again calculated upon ; the man that framed this clause, and who, no doubt, was the hypocritical and renegade whig, Lord Brougham,—must have foreseen that it would necessarily lead to infanticide ! for what must be the feelings of a young woman, who after resisting the temptations and allurements of wealth, becomes attached to a man of her own rank, but has the misfortune to find herself deceived, betrayed, and abandoned by him to whom she was induced to surrender up her virgin purity, not believing that he could be such a perjured wretch as to be capable of violating promises the most faithful, and oaths the most sacred ! Into what a state of distraction, let us ask, would such an object be thrown, when she discovered that her heartless seducer is held innocent in the eyes of the law, and that she can make no appeal to the law against him ! Would it be any wonder if, under such circumstances, she were to attempt to conceal her shame, and to avoid the perils she would be exposed to, in a state of frenzy which such circumstances would naturally create, by the destruction of her offspring ? Such has already been the case in a hundred instances, since this savage law has been put into practice.—Indeed, the framers of this frightful measure must have contemplated a double murder ; for, while the child would be destroyed by the hand of a maniac, a mother would be cut off by the sword of the law ! So horrible did the original clause appear, even in the eyes of the Duke of Wellington, (the business of whose whole life has been human slaughter,) that he was shocked at such an enactment, and moved an amendment, which so shamed Brougham and his colleagues, that they withdrew a portion of the clause ; but this ought not to atone for their brutal intentions towards the weaker sex ; that sex which even savage nations cherish, honor, and protect !

And why was such a clause introduced? Why, but to screen a vile aristocracy, who seduce and ruin more young girls, than all the other male population put together.

I have been led into this digression, by a wish to open the eyes of the working and poor people, to their real condition, and to the fate that awaits them in sickness, want of employment, or old age; and to prevent which I submit to their consideration this just, humane, natural, and irrefutable system of Thomas Spence. The impression which this subject made on the government of this country some years ago must have been very deep, or it would not have brought down the vengeance of the Legislature, in the shape of a law, making it transportation for individuals who should assemble together under the obnoxious title of *Spenceans*! Even Sir Francis Burdett felt so much alarm at this theory, knowing as he must that it had God and nature for its patrons, that he exclaimed, these Spenceans aim at the land! it is high time that we should arm ourselves against them. The late Mr. Canning also, gave his opinion on the character of the Spenceans, which was, that they were a sober and steady set of people, whose principles of reform were easily understood; their leading star directed them to the land!

But although the Spencean sections were abolished by a new law, and several of the leading members consigned to dungeons, among whom were the late *Mr. Thomas Evans** and his son; (the latter of whom was afterwards connected with the *British Traveller* newspaper,) the Spencean principles would have found many able advocates,—as great publicity was given by those impolitic persecutions,—had not Mr. Owen about this period, brought forward his new plan of social arrangements, or community system. This subject engrossed the public mind for a season, and the Spencean system became neglected, though by no means forgotten. I do not like to make invidious comparisons, yet cannot avoid remarking, that while Mr. Owen has enjoyed a full tide of popularity, the writings and principles of poor Spence have been shamefully neglected.—For, even admitting that Mr. Owen's plan is superior to the Spencean system, it must be acknowledged that the latter is the very foundation of the former. And what is more, Mr. Spence's child was born many years before Mr. Owen's darning! For my part, though I shall never cease to advocate the system of Thomas Spence, I shall be always ready to support Mr. Owen, when I see him in earnest to make a trial of his

(* To the lectures, and writings of Mr. Evans, I am considerably indebted, for many remarks and observations contained in this work.)

social community schema. But I am afraid he has no confidence in himself, or that he preaches a doctrine which he has no relish to practice. Nothing appears more easy to me, than the commencement of this new state of society. Let any individual, or individuals, who have the means, purchase or take upon a long lease, a few acres of land, in the first instance; then erect the necessary buildings to establish a school, or schools; let proper persons be appointed as schoolmasters, &c., then publish the conditions of board, lodging, and education; next invite parents and guardians to send their children to the little *new moral world*, and the thing is half done. For there the children would imbibe the new principles, without being exposed to the contamination of old society. In the meantime, sober and steady persons might be appointed to cultivate the gardens and fields belonging to the establishment, thus forming an incipient community, while the children, as they advanced in years, might be set to work in the gardens and fields, or taught some useful trade or calling, according to their several abilities; and at an early age they would be thus able to repay with their labour, that which they might have drawn from the community, in the shape of board, lodging, and education.

Had such a plan been acted upon forty years ago, when Mr. Owen began his philanthropic career, half the country would, ere this time, have been covered with co-operative communities. Mr. Owen's constant complaint is, that the public mind is not prepared for such a great and beneficial change. How should it? How should a boy learn a trade without receiving practical lessons? Without being made to work at the business which it is intended he should follow for his own benefit? The complaint appears to me to be absurd. It is clear to me that Mr. Owen dreads the responsibility necessary to the rearing of his own literary offspring. He fears to attempt to put it in practice himself, lest it should fail, and seems to dread that anybody else should make the attempt, lest it should succeed.

Instead, then, of consuming any more time and expense about the superstructure, let us examine the foundation upon which it might be raised. This foundation is **THE LAND**, and the land is the common property of all! Let the people, therefore, with one united voice, demand the adoption of the Spencean system, under which every individual, having an equal participation in the soil, would not only enjoy an elective right, but would also have a chance of becoming a member of the national council; which would *then*, legislate for the peace, prosperity, and happiness of the whole people, instead of, as at

present, the lords legislating to perpetuate oppression, misery, and degradation, among the slaves!

Let this system be first adopted, and then other great improvements might easily be made. New social arrangements might be introduced; machinery would be employed for the benefit of *all*; and capitalists, under such a superior order of things, would be induced to employ their wealth in such a manner that it would be a blessing, instead of a curse, as the present funding system is felt to be, by the millions whose life-blood is drained away by drops, by fiscal spoliation, in order to support the idle and the vicious, who, in return bestow whips, dungeons, and chains, upon those to whom they are indebted for everything they enjoy.

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Though a TRAITOR's dark spell hurl'd thee on to the tomb,
For the bright star of Genius, that went on before thee,
Now illumines Death's portal, and cheers the cold gloom.

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