SYSTEM OF ECONOMICAL CONTRADICTIONS:

OR,

THE PHILOSOPHY OF MISERY.

By P. J. PROUDHON.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH BY THE EDITOR.

CHAPTER III.

ECONOMIC EVOLUTIONS. — FIRST PERIOD. — THE DIVISION OF LABOR.

THE fundamental idea, the dominant category, of political economy is VALUE.

Value reaches its positive determination by a series of oscillations between *supply* and *demand*.

Consequently, value appears successively under three aspects: useful value, exchangeable value, and synthetic, or social, value, which is true value. The first term gives birth to the second in contradiction to it, and the two together, absorbing each other in reciprocal penetration, produce the third: so that the contradiction or antagonism of ideas appears as the point of departure of all economic science, allowing us to say of it, parodying the sentence of Tertullian in relation to the Gospel, *Credo quia absurdum:* There is, in social economy, a latent truth wherever there is an apparent contradiction, *Credo quia contrarium.*

From the point of view of political economy, then, social progress consists in a continuous solution of the problem of the constitution of values, or of the proportionality and solidarity of products.

But while in Nature the synthesis of opposites is contemporary with their opposition, in society the antithetic elements seem to appear at long intervals, and to reach solution only after long and tumultuous agitation. Thus there is no example — the idea even is inconceivable — of a valley without a hill, a left without a right, a north pole without a south pole, a stick with but one end, or two ends without a middle, etc. The human body, with its so perfectly antithetic dichotomy, is formed integrally at the very moment of conception; it refuses to be put together and arranged piece by piece, like the garment patterned after it which, later, is to cover it.[1]

In society, on the contrary, as well as in the mind, so far from the idea reaching its complete realization at a single bound, a sort of abyss separates, so to speak, the two antinomical positions, and even when these are recognized at last, we still do not see what the synthesis will be. The primitive concepts must be fertilized, so to speak, by burning controversy and passionate struggle; bloody battles will be the preliminaries of peace. At the present moment, Europe, weary of war and discussion, awaits a reconciling principle: and it is the vague perception of this situation which induces the Academy of Moral and Political Sciences to ask, "What are the general facts which govern the relations of profits to wages and determine their oscillations?" in other words, what are the most salient episodes and the most remarkable phases of the war between labor and capital?

If, then, I demonstrate that political economy, with all its contradictory hypotheses and equivocal conclusions, is nothing but an organization of privilege and misery, I shall have proved thereby that it contains by implication the promise of an organization of labor and equality, since, as has been said every systematic contradiction is the announcement of a composition; further, I shall have fixed the bases of this composition. Then, indeed, to unfold the system of economical contradictions is to lay the foundations of universal association; to show how the products of collective labor *come out* of society is to explain how

[1] A subtle philologist, M. Paul Ackermann, has shown, using the French language as an illustration, that, since every word in a language has its opposite, or, as the author calls it, its *antonym*, the entire vocabulary might be arranged in couples, forming a vast dualistic system. (See *Dictionary of Antonyms.* By PAUL ACKERMANN. Paris: Brockhaus & Avenarius. 1842.)

it will be possible to make them *return* to it; to exhibit the genesis of the problems of production and distribution is to prepare the way for their solution. All these propositions are identical and equally evident.

§ 1. — *Antagonistic effects of the principle of division.*

All men are equal in the state of primitive communism, equal in their nakedness and ignorance, equal in the indefinite power of their faculties. The economists generally look at only the first of these aspects; they neglect or overlook the second. Nevertheless, according to the profoundest philosophers of modern times, La Rochefoucault, Helvétius, Kant, Fichte, Hegel, Jacotot, intelligence differs in individuals only *qualitatively*, each having thereby his own specialty or genius; in its essence, — namely, judgment, — it is *quantitatively* equal in all. Hence it follows that, a little sooner or a little later, according as circumstances shall be more or less favorable, general progress must lead all men from original and negative equality to a positive equivalence of talents and acquirements.

I insist upon this precious *datum* of psychology, the necessary consequence of which is that the *hierarchy of capacities* henceforth cannot be allowed as a principle and law of organization: equality alone is our rule, as it is also our ideal. Then, just as the equality of misery must change gradually into equality of well-being, as we have proved by the theory of value, so the equality of minds, negative in the beginning, since it represents only emptiness, must reappear in a positive form at the completion of humanity's education. The intellectual movement proceeds parallelly with the economic movement; they are the expression, the translation, of each other; psychology and social economy are in accord, or rather, they but unroll the same history, each from a different point of view. This appears especially in Smith's great law, the *division of labor*.

Considered in its essence, the division of labor is the way in which equality of condition and intelligence is realized. Through diversity of function, it gives rise to proportionality of products and equilibrium in exchange, and consequently opens for us the

road to wealth; as also, in showing us infinity everywhere in art and Nature, it leads us to idealize our acts, and makes the creative mind — that is, divinity itself, *mentem divinitorem* — immanent and perceptible in all laborers.

Division of labor, then, is the first phase of economic evolution as well as of intellectual development: our point of departure is true as regards both man and things, and the progress of our exposition is in no wise arbitrary.

But, at this solemn hour of the division of labor, tempestuous winds begin to blow upon humanity. Progress does not improve the condition of all equally and uniformly, although in the end it must include and transfigure every intelligent and industrious being. It commences by taking possession of a small number of privileged persons, who thus compose the *élite* of nations, while the mass continues, or even buries itself deeper, in barbarism. It is this exception of persons on the part of progress which has perpetuated the belief in the natural and providential inequality of conditions, engendered caste, and given an hierarchical form to all societies. It has not been understood that all inequality, never being more than a negation, carries in itself the proof of its illegitimacy and the announcement of its downfall: much less still has it been imagined that this same inequality proceeds accidentally from a cause the ulterior effect of which must be its entire disappearance.

Thus, the antinomy of value reappearing in the law of division, it is found that the first and most potent instrument of knowledge and wealth which Providence has placed in our hands has become for us an instrument of misery and imbecility. Here is the formula of this new law of antagonism, to which we owe the two oldest maladies of civilization, aristocracy and the proletariat; *Labor, in dividing itself according to the law which is peculiar to it, and which is the primary condition of its productivity, ends in the frustration of its own objects, and destroys itself;* in other words: *Division, in the absence of which there is no progress, no wealth, no equality, subordinates the workingman, and renders intelligence useless, wealth harmful, and equality impossible.*

All the economists, since Adam Smith, have pointed out the *advantages* and the *inconveniences* of the law of division, but at the same time insisting much more strenuously upon the first

than the second, because such a course was more in harmony with their optimistic views, and not one of them ever asking how a *law* can have *inconveniences*. This is the way in which J. B. Say summed up the question: —

"A man who during his whole life performs but one operation, certainly acquires the power to execute it better and more readily than another; but at the same time he becomes less capable of any other occupation, whether physical or moral; his other faculties become extinct, and there results a degeneracy in the individual man. That one has made only the eighteenth part of a pin is a sad account to give of one's self: but let no one imagine that it is the workingman who spends his life in handling a file or a hammer that alone degenerates in this way from the dignity of his nature; it is the same with the man whose position leads him to exercise the most subtle faculties of his mind. . . On the whole, it may be said that the separation of tasks is an advantageous use of human forces; that it increases enormously the products of society; but that it takes something from the capacity of each man taken individually." [1]

What, then, after labor, is the primary cause of the multiplication of wealth and the skill of laborers? Division.

What is the primary cause of intellectual degeneracy and, as we shall show continually, civilized misery? Division.

How does the same principle, rigorously followed to its conclusions, lead to effects diametrically opposite? There is not an economist, either before or since Adam Smith, who has even perceived that here is a problem to be solved. Say goes so far as to recognize that in the division of labor the same cause which produces the good engenders the evil; then, after a few words of pity for the victims of the separation of industries, content with having given an impartial and faithful exhibition of the facts, he leaves the matter there. "You know," he seems to say, "that the more we divide the workmen's tasks, the more we increase the productive power of labor; but at the same time the more does labor, gradually reducing itself to a mechanical operation, stupefy intelligence."

In vain do we express our indignation against a theory which, creating by labor itself an aristocracy of capacities, leads inevitably to political inequality; in vain do we protest in the name of democracy and progress that in the future there will be no nobility, no *bourgeoisie*, no pariahs. The economist replies, with the impassibility of destiny: You are condemned to produce

[1] "Treatise on Political Economy."

much, and to produce cheaply; otherwise your industry will be always insignificant, your commerce will amount to nothing, and you will drag in the rear of civilization instead of taking the lead. — What! among us, generous men, there are some predestined to brutishness; and the more perfect our industry becomes, the larger will grow the number of our accursed brothers! . . . — Alas! . . . That is the last word of the economist.

We cannot fail to recognize in the division of labor, as a general fact and as a cause, all the characteristics of a LAW; but as this law governs two orders of phenomena radically opposite and destructive of each other, it must be confessed also that this law is of a sort unknown in the exact sciences, — that it is, strange to say, a contradictory law, a *counter-law*, an antinomy. Let us add, in anticipation, that such appears to be the identifying feature of social economy, and consequently of philosophy.

Now, without a RECOMPOSITION of labor which shall obviate the inconveniences of division while preserving its useful effects, the contradiction inherent in the principle is irremediable. It is necessary, — following the style of the Jewish priests plotting the death of Christ, — it is necessary that the poor should perish to secure the proprietor his fortune, *expedit unum hominem pro populo mori*. I am going to demonstrate the necessity of this decree; after which, if the *parcellaire* laborer still retains a glimmer of intelligence, he will console himself with the thought that he dies according to the rules of political economy.

Labor, which ought to give scope to the conscience and render it more and more worthy of happiness, leading through *parcellaire* division to prostration of mind, dwarfs man in his noblest part, *minorat capitis*, and throws him back into animality. Thenceforth the fallen man labors as a brute, and consequently must be treated as a brute. This sentence of Nature and necessity society will execute.

The first effect of *parcellaire* labor, after the depravation of the mind, is the lengthening of the hours of labor, which increase in inverse proportion to the amount of intelligence expended. For, the product increasing in quantity and quality at once, if, by any industrial improvement whatever, labor is lightened in one way, it must pay for it in another. But as the length of the working-day cannot exceed from sixteen to eighteen hours, when compen-

sation no longer can be made in time, it will be taken from the price, and wages will decrease. And this decrease will take place, not, as has been foolishly imagined, because value is essentially arbitrary, but because it is essentially determinable. Little matters it that the struggle between supply and demand ends, now to the advantage of the employer, now to the benefit of the employee; such oscillations may vary in amplitude, this depending on well-known accessory circumstances which have been estimated a thousand times. The certain point, and the only one for us to notice now, is that the universal conscience does not set the same price upon the labor of an overseer and the work of a hod-carrier. A reduction in the price of the day's work, then, is necessary: so that the laborer, after having been afflicted in mind by a degrading function, cannot fail to be struck also in his body by the meagreness of his reward. This is the literal application of the words of the Gospel: *He that hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he hath.*

There is in economic accidents a pitiless reason which laughs at religion and equity as political aphorisms, and which renders man happy or unhappy according as he obeys or escapes the prescriptions of destiny. Certainly this is far from that Christian charity with which so many honorable writers to-day are inspired, and which, penetrating to the heart of the *bourgeoisie*, endeavors to temper the rigors of the law by numerous religious institutions. Political economy knows only justice, justice as inflexible and unyielding as the miser's purse; and it is because political economy is the effect of social spontaneity and the expression of the divine will that I have been able to say: God is man's adversary, and Providence a misanthrope. God makes us pay, in weight of blood and measure of tears, for each of our lessons; and to complete the evil, we, in our relations with our fellows, all act like him. Where, then, is this love of the celestial father for his creatures? Where is human fraternity?

Can he do otherwise? say the theists. Man falling, the animal remains: how could the Creator recognize in him his own image? And what plainer than that he treats him then as a beast of burden? But the trial will not last for ever, and sooner or later labor, having been *particularized*, will be synthetized.

Such is the ordinary argument of all those who seek to justify

Providence, but generally succeed only in lending new weapons to atheism. That is to say, then, that God would have envied us, for six thousand years, an idea which would have saved millions of victims, a distribution of labor at once special and synthetic! In return, he has given us, through his servants Moses, Buddha, Zoroaster, Mahomet, etc., those insipid writings, the disgrace of our reason, which have killed more men than they contain letters! Further, if we must believe primitive revelation, social economy was the cursed science, the fruit of the tree reserved for God, which man was forbidden to touch! Why this religious depreciation of labor, if it is true, as economic science already shows, that labor is the father of love and the organ of happiness? Why this jealousy of our advancement? But if, as now sufficiently appears, our progress depends upon ourselves alone, of what use is it to adore this phantom of divinity, and what does he still ask of us through the multitude of inspired persons who pursue us with their sermons? All of you, Christians, protestant and orthodox, neo-revelators, charlatans and dupes, listen to the first verse of the humanitarian hymn upon God's mercy: "In proportion as the principle of division of labor receives complete application, the worker becomes weaker, narrower, and more dependent. Art advances; the artisan recedes!"[1]

Then let us guard against anticipating conclusions and prejudging the latest revelation of experience. At present God seems less favorable than hostile: let us confine ourselves to establishing the fact.

Just as political economy, then, at its point of departure, has made us understand these mysterious and dismal words: *In proportion as the production of utility increases, venality decreases;* so, arrived at its first station, it warns us in a terrible voice: *In proportion as art advances, the artisan recedes.*

To fix the ideas better, let us cite a few examples.

In all the branches of metal-working, who are the least industrious of the wage-laborers? Precisely those who are called *machinists.* Since tools have been so admirably perfected, a machinist is simply a man who knows how to handle a file or a plane: as for mechanics, that is the business of engineers and foremen. A

[1] Tocqueville, "Democracy in America."

country blacksmith often unites in his own person, by the very necessity of his position, the various talents of the locksmith, the edge-tool maker, the gunsmith, the machinist, the wheel-wright, and the horse-doctor: the world of thought would be astonished at the knowledge that is under the hammer of this man, whom the people, always inclined to jest, nickname *brûle-fer*. A workingman of Creuzot, who for ten years has seen the grandest and finest that his profession can offer, on leaving his shop, finds himself unable to render the slightest service or to earn his living. The incapacity of the subject is directly proportional to the perfection of the art; and this is as true of all the trades as of metal-working.

The wages of machinists are maintained as yet at a high rate: sooner or later their pay must decrease, the poor quality of the labor being unable to maintain it.

I have just cited a mechanical art; let us now cite a liberal industry.

Would Gutenberg and his industrious companions, Faust and Schöffer, ever have believed that, by the division of labor, their sublime invention would fall into the domain of ignorance — I had almost said idiocy? There are few men so weak-minded, so *unlettered*, as the mass of workers who follow the various branches of the typographic industry, — compositors, pressmen, type-founders, book-binders, and paper-makers. The printer, as he existed even in the days of the Estiennes, has become almost an abstraction. The employment of women in type-setting has struck this noble industry to the heart, and consummated its degradation. I have seen a female compositor — and she was one of the best — who did not know how to read, and was acquainted only with the forms of the letters. The whole art has been withdrawn into the hands of foremen and proof-readers, modest men of learning whom the impertinence of authors and patrons still humiliates, and a few workmen who are real artists. The press, in a word, fallen into mere mechanism, is no longer, in its *personnel*, at the level of civilization: soon there will be left of it but a few souvenirs.

I am told that the printers of Paris are endeavoring by association to rise again from their degradation: may their efforts not be exhausted in vain empiricism or misled into barren utopias!

After private industries, let us look at public administration.

In the public service, the effects of *parcellaire* labor are no less frightful, no less intense: in all the departments of administration, in proportion as the art develops, most of the employees see their salaries diminish. A letter-carrier receives from four hundred to six hundred francs *per annum*, of which the administration retains about a tenth for the retiring pension. After thirty years of labor, the pension, or rather the restitution, is three hundred francs *per annum*, which, when given to an almshouse by the pensioner, entitles him to a bed, soup, and washing. My heart bleeds to say it, but I think, nevertheless, that the administration is generous: what reward would you give to a man whose whole function consists in walking? The legend gives but *five sous* to the Wandering Jew; the letter-carriers receive twenty or thirty; true, the greater part of them have a family. That part of the service which calls into exercise the intellectual faculties is reserved for the postmasters and clerks: these are better paid; they do the work of men.

Everywhere, then, in public service as well as free industry, things are so ordered that nine-tenths of the laborers serve as beasts of burden for the other tenth: such is the inevitable effect of industrial progress and the indispensable condition of all wealth. It is important to look well at this elementary truth before talking to the people of equality, liberty, democratic institutions, and other utopias, the realization of which involves a previous complete revolution in the relations of laborers.

The most remarkable effect of the division of labor is the decay of literature.

In the Middle Ages and in antiquity the man of letters, a sort of encyclopædic doctor, a successor of the troubadour and the poet all-knowing, was almighty. Literature lorded it over society with a high hand; kings sought the favor of authors, or revenged themselves for their contempt by burning them, — them and their books. This, too, was a way of recognizing literary sovereignty.

To-day we have manufacturers, lawyers, doctors, bankers, merchants, professors, engineers, librarians, etc.; we have no men of letters. Or rather, whoever has risen to a remarkable height in his profession is thereby and of necessity lettered: literature,

like the baccalaureate, has become an elementary part of every profession. The man of letters, reduced to his simplest expression, is the *public writer*, a sort of writing commissioner in the pay of everybody, whose best-known variety is the journalist.

It was a strange idea that occurred to the Chambers four years ago, — that of making a law on literary property! As if henceforth the idea was not to become more and more the all-important point, the style nothing. Thanks to God, there is an end of parliamentary eloquence as of epic poetry and mythology; the theatre rarely attracts business men and *savants*; and while the connoisseurs are astonished at the decline of art, the philosophic observer sees only the progress of manly reason, troubled rather than rejoiced at these dainty trifles. The interest in romance is sustained only as long as it resembles reality; history is reducing itself to anthropological exegesis; everywhere, indeed, the art of talking well appears as a subordinate auxiliary of the idea, the fact. The worship of speech, too mazy and slow for impatient minds, is neglected, and its artifices are losing daily their power of seduction. The language of the nineteenth century is made up of facts and figures, and he is the most eloquent among us who, with the fewest words, can say the most things. Whoever cannot speak this language is mercilessly relegated to the ranks of the rhetoricians; he is said to have no ideas.

In a young society the progress of letters necessarily outstrips philosophical and industrial progress, and for a long time serves for the expression of both. But there comes a day when thought leaves language in the rear, and when, consequently, the continued preëminence of literature in a society becomes a sure symptom of decline. Language, in fact, is to every people the collection of its native ideas, the encyclopædia which Providence first reveals to it; it is the field which its reason must cultivate before directly attacking Nature through observation and experience. Now, as soon as a nation, after having exhausted the knowledge contained in its vocabulary, instead of pursuing its education by a superior philosophy, wraps itself in its poetic mantle, and begins to play with its periods and its hemistichs, we may safely say that such a society is lost. Every thing in it will become subtle, narrow, and false; it will not have even the advantage of maintaining in its splendor the language of which it is foolishly enamored; instead of going forward in the path of the geniuses of transition, the Tacituses, the Thucydides, the Machiavels, and the Montesquieus, it will be seen to fall, with irresistible force, from the majesty of Cicero to the subtleties of Seneca, the antitheses of St. Augustine, and the puns of St. Bernard.

Let no one, then, be deceived: from the moment that the mind, at first entirely occupied with speech, passes to experience and labor, the man of letters, properly speaking, is simply the puny personification of the least of our faculties; and literature, the refuse of intelligent industry, finds a market only with the idlers whom it amuses and the proletaires whom it fascinates, the jugglers who besiege power and the charlatans who shelter themselves behind it, the hierophants of divine right who blow the trumpet of Sinai, and the fanatical proclaimers of the sovereignty of the people, whose few mouth-pieces, compelled to practise their tribunician eloquence from tombs until they can shower it from the height of rostrums, know no better than to give to the public parodies of Gracchus and Demosthenes.

All the powers of society, then, agree in indefinitely deteriorating the condition of the *parcellaire* laborer; and experience, universally confirming the theory, proves that this worker is condemned to misfortune from his mother's womb, no political reform, no association of interests, no effort either of public charity or of instruction, having the power to aid him. The various specifics proposed in these latter days, far from being able to cure the evil, would tend rather to inflame it by irritation; and all that has been written on this point has only exhibited in a clear light the vicious circle of political economy.

This we shall demonstrate in a few words.

§ 2. — *Impotence of palliatives. — MM. Blanqui, Chevalier, Dunoyer, Rossi, and Passy.*

All the remedies proposed for the fatal effects of *parcellaire* division may be reduced to two, which really are but one, the second being the inversion of the first: to raise the mental and moral condition of the workingman by increasing his comfort

and dignity; or else, to prepare the way for his future emancipation and happiness by instruction.

We will examine successively these two systems, one of which is represented by M. Blanqui, the other by M. Chevalier.

M. Blanqui is a friend of association and progress, a writer of democratic tendencies, a professor who has a place in the hearts of the proletariat. In his opening discourse of the year 1845, M. Blanqui proclaimed, as a means of salvation, the association of labor and capital, the participation of the workingman in the profits, — that is, a beginning of industrial solidarity. "Our century," he exclaimed, "must witness the birth of the collective producer." M. Blanqui forgets that the collective producer was born long since, as well as the collective consumer, and that the question is no longer a genetic, but a medical, one. Our task is to cause the blood proceeding from the collective digestion, instead of rushing wholly to the head, stomach, and lungs, to descend also into the legs and arms. Besides, I do not know what method M. Blanqui proposes to employ in order to realize his generous thought, — whether it be the establishment of national workshops, or the loaning of capital by the State, or the expropriation of the conductors of business enterprises and the substitution for them of industrial associations, or, finally, whether he will rest content with a recommendation of the savings-bank to workingmen, in which case the participation would be put off till doomsday.

However this may be, M. Blanqui's idea amounts simply to an increase of wages resulting from the copartnership, or at least from the interest in the business, which he confers upon the laborers. What, then, is the value to the laborer of a participation in the profits?

A mill with fifteen thousand spindles, employing three hundred hands, does not pay at present an annual dividend of twenty thousand francs. I am informed by a Mulhouse manufacturer that factory stocks in Alsace are generally below par and that this industry has already become a means of getting money by *stock-jobbing* instead of by *labor*. To SELL; to sell at the right time; to sell dear, — is the only object in view; to manufacture is only to prepare for a sale. When I assume, then, on an average, a profit of twenty thousand francs to a factory employing

three hundred persons, my argument being general, I am twenty thousand francs out of the way. Nevertheless, we will admit the correctness of this amount. Dividing twenty thousand francs, the profit of the mill, by three hundred, the number of persons, and again by three hundred, the number of working days, I find an increase of pay for each person of twenty-two and one-fifth centimes, or for daily expenditure an addition of eighteen centimes, just a morsel of bread. Is it worth while, then, for this, to expropriate mill-owners and endanger the public welfare, by erecting establishments which must be insecure, since, property being divided into infinitely small shares, and being no longer supported by profit, business enterprises would lack ballast, and would be unable to weather commercial gales. And even if no expropriation was involved, what a poor prospect to offer the working class is an increase of eighteen centimes in return for centuries of economy; for no less time than this would be needed to accumulate the requisite capital, supposing that periodical suspensions of business did not periodically consume its savings!

The fact which I have just stated has been pointed out in several ways. M. Passy[1] himself took from the books of a mill in Normandy where the laborers were associated with the owner the wages of several families for a period of ten years, and he found that they averaged from twelve to fourteen hundred francs per year. He then compared the situation of mill-hands paid in proportion to the profits obtained by their employers with that of laborers receiving fixed wages, and found that the difference is almost imperceptible. This result might easily have been foreseen. Economic phenomena obey laws as abstract and immutable as those of numbers: it is only privilege, fraud, and absolutism which disturb the eternal harmony.

M. Blanqui, repentant, as it seems, at having taken this first step toward socialistic ideas, has made haste to retract his words. At the same meeting in which M. Passy demonstrated the inadequacy of cooperative association, he exclaimed: "Does it not seem that labor is a thing susceptible of organization, and that it is in the power of the State to regulate the happiness of humanity as it does the march of an army, and with an entirely mathematical

* Does one business failure prove the failure of free enterprise?

[1] Meeting of the Academy of Moral and Political Sciences, September, 1845.

precision? This is an evil tendency, a delusion which the Academy cannot oppose too strongly, because it is not only a chimera, but a dangerous sophism. Let us respect good and honest intentions; but let us not fear to say that to publish a book upon the *organization of labor* is to rewrite for the fiftieth time a treatise upon the quadrature of the circle or the philosopher's stone."

Then, carried away by his zeal, M. Blanqui finishes the destruction of his theory of coöperation, which M. Passy already had so rudely shaken, by the following example: "M. Bailly, one of the most enlightened of farmers, has drawn up an account for each piece of land and an account for each product; and he proves that within a period of thirty years the same man has never obtained equal crops from the same piece of land. The products have varied from twenty-six thousand francs to nine thousand or seven thousand francs, sometimes descending as low as three hundred francs. There are also certain products — potatoes, for instance — which fail one time in ten. How, then, with these variations and with revenues so uncertain, can we establish even distribution and uniform wages for laborers? . . ."

It might be answered that the variations in the product of each piece of land simply indicate that it is necessary to associate proprietors with each other after having associated laborers with proprietors, which would establish a more complete solidarity: but this would be a prejudgment on the very thing in question, which M. Blanqui definitively decides, after reflection, to be unattainable, — namely, the organization of labor. Besides, it is evident that solidarity would not add an obolus to the common wealth, and that, consequently, it does not even touch the problem of division.

In short, the profit so much envied, and often a very uncertain matter with employers, falls far short of the difference between actual wages and the wages desired; and M. Blanqui's former plan, miserable in its results and disavowed by its author, would be a scourge to the manufacturing industry. Now, the division of labor being henceforth universally established, the argument is generalized, and leads us to the conclusion that *misery is an effect of labor*, as well as of idleness.

The answer to this is, and it is a favorite argument with the people: Increase the price of services; double and triple wages.

I confess that if such an increase was possible it would be a complete success, whatever M. Chevalier may have said, who needs to be slightly corrected on this point.

According to M. Chevalier, if the price of any kind of merchandise whatever is increased, other kinds will rise in a like proportion, and no one will benefit thereby.

This argument, which the economists have rehearsed for more than a century, is as false as it is old, and it belonged to M. Chevalier, as an engineer, to rectify the economic tradition. The salary of a head clerk being ten francs per day, and the wages of a workingman four, if the income of each is increased five francs, the ratio of their fortunes, which was formerly as one hundred to forty, will be thereafter as one hundred to sixty. The increase of wages, necessarily taking place by addition and not by proportion, would be, therefore, an excellent method of equalization; and the economists would deserve to have thrown back at them by the socialists the reproach of ignorance which they have bestowed upon them at random.

But I say that such an increase is impossible, and that the supposition is absurd: for, as M. Chevalier has shown very clearly elsewhere, the figure which indicates the price of the day's labor is only an algebraic exponent without effect on the reality: and that which it is necessary first to endeavor to increase, while correcting the inequalities of distribution, is not the monetary expression, but the quantity of products. Till then every rise of wages can have no other effect than that produced by a rise of the price of wheat, wine, meat, sugar, soap, coal, etc., — that is, the effect of a scarcity. For what is wages?

It is the cost price of wheat, wine, meat, coal; it is the integrant price of all things. Let us go farther yet: wages is the proportionality of the elements which compose wealth, and which are consumed every day reproductively by the mass of laborers. Now, to double wages, in the sense in which the people understand the words, is to give to each producer a share greater than his product, which is contradictory: and if the rise pertains only to a few industries, a general disturbance in exchange ensues. — that is, a scarcity. God save me from predictions! but, in spite of my desire for the amelioration of the lot of the working class, I declare that it is impossible for strikes followed by

an increase of wages to end otherwise than in a general rise in prices: that is as certain as that two and two make four. It is not by such methods that the workingmen will attain to wealth and — what is a thousand times more precious than wealth — liberty. The workingmen, supported by the favor of an indiscreet press, in demanding an increase of wages, have served monopoly much better than their own real interests: may they recognize, when their situation shall become more painful, the bitter fruit of their inexperience!

Convinced of the uselessness, or rather, of the fatal effects, of an increase of wages, and seeing clearly that the question is wholly organic and not at all commercial, M. Chevalier attacks the problem at the other end. He asks for the working class, first of all, instruction, and proposes extensive reforms in this direction.

Instruction! this is also M. Arago's word to the workingmen; it is the principle of all progress. Instruction! . . . It should be known once for all what may be expected from it in the solution of the problem before us; it should be known, I say, not whether it is desirable that all should receive it, — this no one doubts. — but whether it is possible.

To clearly comprehend the complete significance of M. Chevalier's views, a knowledge of his methods is indispensable.

M. Chevalier, long accustomed to discipline, first by his polytechnic studies, then by his St. Simonian connections, and finally by his position in the University, does not seem to admit that a pupil can have any other inclination than to obey the regulations, a sectarian any other thought than that of his chief, a public functionary any other opinion than that of the government. This may be a conception of order as respectable as any other, and I hear upon this subject no expressions of approval or censure. Has M. Chevalier an idea to offer peculiar to himself? On the principle that all that is not forbidden by law is allowed, he hastens to the front to deliver his opinion, and then abandons it to give his adhesion, if there is occasion, to the opinion of authority. It was thus that M. Chevalier, before settling down in the bosom of the Constitution, joined M. Enfantin: it was thus that he gave his views upon canals, railroads, finance, property, long before the administration had adopted any system

in relation to the construction of railways, the changing of the rate of interest on bonds, patents, literary property, etc.

M. Chevalier, then, is not a blind admirer of the University system of instruction, — far from it; and until the appearance of the new order of things, he does not hesitate to say what he thinks. His opinions are of the most radical.

M. Villemain had said in his report: "The object of the higher education is to prepare in advance a choice of men to occupy and serve in all the positions of the administration, the magistracy, the bar and the various liberal professions, including the higher ranks and learned specialties of the army and navy."

"The higher education," thereupon observes M. Chevalier,[1] "is designed also to prepare men some of whom shall be farmers, others manufacturers, these merchants, and those private engineers. Now, in the official programme, all these classes are forgotten. The omission is of considerable importance; for, indeed, industry in its various forms, agriculture, commerce, are neither accessories nor accidents in a State: they are its chief dependence. . . . If the University desires to justify its name, it must provide a course in these things; else an *industrial university* will be established in opposition to it. . . . We shall have altar against altar, etc. . . ."

And as it is characteristic of a luminous idea to throw light on all questions connected with it, professional instruction furnishes M. Chevalier with a very expeditious method of deciding, incidentally, the quarrel between the clergy and the University on liberty of education.

"It must be admitted that a very great concession is made to the clergy in allowing Latin to serve as the basis of education. The clergy know Latin as well as the University; it is their own tongue. Their tuition, moreover, is cheaper; hence they must inevitably draw a large portion of our youth into their small seminaries and their schools of a higher grade. . . ."

The conclusion of course follows: change the course of study, and you decatholicize the realm; and as the clergy know only Latin and the Bible, when they have among them neither masters of art, nor farmers, nor accountants; when, of their forty

[1] "Journal des Economistes," April, 1843.

thousand priests, there are not twenty, perhaps, with the ability to make a plan or forge a nail, — we soon shall see which the fathers of families will choose, industry or the breviary, and whether they do not regard labor as the most beautiful language in which to pray to God.

Thus would end this ridiculous opposition between religious education and profane science, between the spiritual and the temporal, between reason and faith, between altar and throne. old rubrics henceforth meaningless, but with which they still impose upon the good nature of the public, until it takes offence.

M. Chevalier does not insist, however, on this solution: he knows that religion and monarchy are two powers which, though continually quarreling, cannot exist without each other; and that he may not awaken suspicion, he launches out into another revolutionary idea, — equality.

"France is in a position to furnish the polytechnic school with twenty times as many scholars as enter at present (the average being one hundred and seventy-six, this would amount to three thousand five hundred and twenty). The University has but to say the word. . . . If my opinion was of any weight, I should maintain that mathematical capacity is *much less special* than is commonly supposed. I remember the success with which children, taken at random, so to speak, from the pavements of Paris, follow the teaching of La Martinière by the method of Captain Tabareau."

If the higher education, reconstructed according to the views of M. Chevalier, was sought after by all young Frenchmen instead of by only ninety thousand as commonly, there would be no exaggeration in raising the estimate of the number of minds mathematically inclined from three thousand five hundred and twenty to ten thousand; but, by the same argument, we should have ten thousand artists, philologists, and philosophers; ten thousand doctors, physicians, chemists, and naturalists; ten thousand economists, legists, and administrators; twenty thousand manufacturers, foremen, merchants, and accountants; forty thousand farmers, wine-growers, miners, etc., — in all, one hundred thousand specialists a year, or about one-third of our youth. The rest, having, instead of special adaptations, only mingled adaptations, would be distributed indifferently elsewhere.

It is certain that so powerful an impetus given to intelligence would quicken the progress of equality, and I do not doubt that such is the secret desire of M. Chevalier. But that is precisely what troubles me: capacity is never wanting, any more than population, and the problem is to find employment for the one and bread for the other. In vain does M. Chevalier tell us: "The higher education would give less ground for the complaint that it throws into society crowds of ambitious persons without any means of satisfying their desires, and interested in the overthrow of the State; people without employment and unable to get any, good for nothing and believing themselves fit for any thing especially for the direction of public affairs. Scientific studies do not so inflate the mind. They enlighten and regulate it at once; they fit men for practical life. . . ." Such language, I reply, is good to use with patriarchs: a professor of political economy should have more respect for his position and his audience. The government has only one hundred and twenty offices annually at its disposal for one hundred and seventy-six students admitted to the polytechnic school: what, then, would be its embarrassment if the number of admissions was ten thousand, or even, taking M. Chevalier's figures, three thousand five hundred? And, to generalize, the whole number of civil positions is sixty thousand, or three thousand vacancies annually; what dismay would the government be thrown into if, suddenly adopting the reformatory ideas of M. Chevalier, it should find itself besieged by fifty thousand office-seekers! The following objection has often been made to republicans without eliciting a reply: When everybody shall have the electoral privilege, will the deputies do any better, and will the proletariat be further advanced? I ask the same question of M. Chevalier: When each academic year shall bring you one hundred thousand fitted men, what will you do with them?

To provide for these interesting young people, you will go down to the lowest round of the ladder. You will oblige the young man, after fifteen years of lofty study, to begin, no longer as now with the offices of aspirant engineer, sub-lieutenant of artillery, second lieutenant, deputy, comptroller, general guardian, etc., but with the ignoble positions of pioneer, train-soldier, dredger, cabin-boy, fagot-maker, and exciseman. There he will

wait, until death, thinning the ranks, enables him to advance a step. Under such circumstances a man, a graduate of the polytechnic school and capable of becoming a Vauban, may die a laborer on a second class road, or a corporal in a regiment.

Oh! how much more prudent Catholicism has shown itself, and how far it has surpassed you all, St. Simonians, republicans, university men, economists, in the knowledge of man and society! The priest knows that our life is but a voyage, and that our perfection cannot be realized here below; and he contents himself with outlining on earth an education which must be completed in heaven. The man whom religion has moulded, content to know, do, and obtain what suffices for his earthly destiny, never can become a source of embarrassment to the government: rather would he be a martyr. O beloved religion! is it necessary that a *bourgeoisie* which stands in such need of you should disown you? . . .

Into what terrible struggles of pride and misery does this mania for universal instruction plunge us! Of what use is professional education, of what good are agricultural and commercial schools, if your students have neither employment nor capital? And what need to cram one's self till the age of twenty with all sorts of knowledge, then to fasten the threads of a mule-jenny or pick coal at the bottom of a pit? What! you have by your own confession only three thousand positions annually to bestow upon fifty thousand possible capacities, and yet you talk of establishing schools! Cling rather to your system of exclusion and privilege, a system as old as the world, the support of dynasties and patriciates, a veritable machine for gelding men in order to secure the pleasures of a caste of Sultans. Set a high price upon your teaching, multiply obstacles, drive away, by lengthy tests, the son of the proletaire whom hunger does not permit to wait, and protect with all your power the ecclesiastical school where the students are taught to labor for the other life, to cultivate resignation, to fast, to respect those in high places, to love the king, and to pray to God. For every useless study sooner or later becomes an abandoned study: knowledge is poison to slaves.

Surely M. Chevalier has too much sagacity not to have seen the consequences of his idea. But he has spoken from the bottom of his heart, and we can only applaud his good intentions: men must first be men; after that, he may live who can.

Thus we advance at random, guided by Providence, who never warns us except with a blow: this is the beginning and end of political economy.

Contrary to M. Chevalier, professor of political economy at the College of France, M. Dunoyer, an economist of the Institute, does not wish instruction to be organized. The organization of instruction is a species of organization of labor; therefore, no organization. Instruction, observes M. Dunoyer, is a profession, not a function of the State; like all professions, it ought to be and remain free. It is communism, it is socialism, it is the revolutionary tendency, whose principal agents have been Robespierre, Napoleon, Louis XVIII, and M. Guizot, which have thrown into our midst these fatal ideas of the centralization and absorption of all activity in the State. The press is very free, and the pen of the journalist is an object of merchandise; religion, too, is very free, and every wearer of a gown, be it short or long, who knows how to excite public curiosity, can draw an audience about him. M. Lacordaire has his devotees, M. Leroux his apostles, M. Buchez his convent. Why, then, should not instruction also be free? If the right of the instructed, like that of the buyer, is unquestionable, and that of the instructor, who is only a variety of the seller, is its correlative, it is impossible to infringe upon the liberty of instruction without doing violence to the most precious of liberties, that of the conscience. And then, adds M. Dunoyer, if the State owes instruction to everybody, it will soon be maintained that it owes labor; then lodging; then shelter. . . . Where does that lead to?

The argument of M. Dunoyer is irrefutable: to organize instruction is to give to every citizen a pledge of liberal employment and comfortable wages; the two are as intimately connected as the circulation of the arteries and the veins. But M. Dunoyer's theory implies also that progress belongs only to a certain select portion of humanity, and that barbarism is the eternal lot of nine-tenths of the human race. It is this which constitutes, according to M. Dunoyer, the very essence of society, which manifests itself in three stages, religion, hierarchy, and beggary. So that in this system, which is that of Destutt

de Tracy, Montesquieu, and Plato, the antinomy of division, like that of value, is without solution.

It is a source of inexpressible pleasure to me, I confess, to see M. Chevalier, a defender of the centralization of instruction, opposed by M. Dunoyer, a defender of liberty; M. Dunoyer in his turn antagonized by M. Guizot; M. Guizot, the representative of the centralizers, contradicting the Charter, which posits liberty as a principle; the Charter trampled under foot by the University men, who lay sole claim to the privilege of teaching, regardless of the express command of the Gospel to the priests: *Go and teach.* And above all this tumult of economists, legislators, ministers, academicians, professors, and priests, economic Providence giving the lie to the Gospel, and shouting: Pedagogues! what use am I to make of your instruction?

Who will relieve us of this anxiety? M. Rossi leans toward eclecticism: Too little divided, he says, labor remains unproductive; too much divided, it degrades man. Wisdom lies between these extremes: *in medio virtus.* Unfortunately this intermediate wisdom is only a small amount of poverty joined with a small amount of wealth, so that the condition is not modified in the least. The proportion of good and evil, instead of being as one hundred to one hundred, becomes as fifty to fifty: in this we may take, once for all, the measure of eclecticism. For the rest, M. Rossi's *juste-milieu* is in direct opposition to the great economic law: *To produce with the least possible expense the greatest possible quantity of values.* . . . Now, how can labor fulfil its destiny without an extreme division? Let us look farther, if you please.

"All economic systems and hypotheses," says M. Rossi, "belong to the economist, but the intelligent, free, responsible man is under the control of the moral law. . . Political economy is only a science which examines the relations of things, and draws conclusions therefrom. It examines the effects of labor; in the application of labor, you should consider the importance of the object in view. When the application of labor is unfavorable to an object higher than the production of wealth, it should not be applied. . . . Suppose that it would increase the national wealth to compel children to labor fifteen hours a day: morality would say that that is not allowable. Does that prove that political economy is false? No; that proves that you confound things which should be kept separate."

If M. Rossi had a little more of that Gallic simplicity so difficult for foreigners to acquire, he would very summarily have *thrown his tongue to the dogs*, as Madame de Sévigné said. But a professor must talk, talk, talk, not for the sake of saying any thing, but in order to avoid silence. M. Rossi takes three turns around the question, then lies down: that is enough to make certain people believe that he has answered it.

It is surely a sad symptom for a science when, in developing itself according to its own principles, it reaches its object just in time to be contradicted by another; as, for example, when the postulates of political economy are found to be opposed to those of morality, for I suppose that morality is a science as well as political economy. What, then, is human knowledge, if all its affirmations destroy each other, and on what shall we rely? Divided labor is a slave's occupation, but it alone is really productive; undivided labor belongs to the free man, but it does not pay its expenses. On the one hand, political economy tells us to be rich; on the other, morality tells us to be free; and M. Rossi, speaking in the name of both, warns us at the same time that we can be neither free nor rich, for to be but half of either is to be neither. M. Rossi's *doctrine*, then, far from satisfying this double desire of humanity, is open to the objection that, to avoid exclusiveness, it strips us of every thing: it is, under another form, the history of the representative system.

But the antagonism is even more profound than M. Rossi has supposed. For since, according to universal experience (on this point in harmony with theory), wages decrease in proportion to the division of labor, it is clear that, in submitting ourselves to *parcellaire* slavery, we thereby shall not obtain wealth; we shall only change men into machines: witness the laboring population of the two worlds. And since, on the other hand, without the division of labor, society falls back into barbarism, it is evident also that, by sacrificing wealth, we shall not obtain liberty: witness all the wandering tribes of Asia and Africa. Therefore it is necessary — economic science and morality absolutely command it — for us to solve the problem of division: now, where are the economists? More than thirty years ago, Lemontey, de-

veloping a remark of Smith, exposed the demoralizing and homicidal influence of the division of labor. What has been the reply; what investigations have been made; what remedies proposed; has the question even been understood?

Every year the economists report, with an exactness which I would commend more highly if I did not see that it is always fruitless, the commercial condition of the States of Europe. They know how many yards of cloth, pieces of silk, pounds of iron, have been manufactured; what has been the consumption per head of wheat, wine, sugar, meat: it might be said that to them the ultimate of science is to publish inventories, and the object of their labor is to become general comptrollers of nations. Never did such a mass of material offer so fine a field for investigation. What has been found; what new principle has sprung from this mass; what solution of the many problems of long standing has been reached; what new direction have studies taken?

One question, among others, seems to have been prepared for a final judgment, — pauperism. Pauperism, of all the phenomena of the civilized world, is to-day the best known: we know pretty nearly whence it comes, when and how it arrives, and what it costs; its proportion at various stages of civilization has been calculated, and we have convinced ourselves that all the specifics with which it hitherto has been fought have been impotent. Pauperism has been divided into genera, species, and varieties: it is a complete natural history, one of the most important branches of anthropology. Well! the unquestionable result of all the facts collected, unseen, shunned, covered by the economists with their silence, is that pauperism is constitutional and chronic in society as long as the antagonism between labor and capital continues, and that this antagonism can end only by the absolute negation of political economy. What issue from this labyrinth have the economists discovered?

This last point deserves a moment's attention.

In primitive communism misery, as I have observed in a preceding paragraph, is the universal condition.

Labor is war declared upon this misery.

Labor organizes itself, first by division, next by machinery, then by competition, etc.

Now, the question is whether it is not in the essence of this organization, as given us by political economy, at the same time that it puts an end to the misery of some, to aggravate that of others in a fatal and unavoidable manner. These are the terms in which the question of pauperism must be stated, and for this reason we have undertaken to solve it.

What means, then, this eternal babble of the economists about the improvidence of laborers, their idleness, their want of dignity, their ignorance, their debauchery, their early marriages, etc? All these vices and excesses are only the cloak of pauperism; but the cause, the original cause which inexorably holds four-fifths of the human race in disgrace, — what is it? Did not Nature make all men equally gross, averse to labor, wanton, and wild? Did not patrician and proletaire spring from the same clay? Then how happens it that, after so many centuries, and in spite of so many miracles of industry, science, and art, comfort and culture have not become the inheritance of all? How happens it that in Paris and London, centres of social wealth, poverty is as hideous as in the days of Cæsar and Agricola? Why, by the side of this refined aristocracy, has the mass remained so uncultivated? It is laid to the vices of the people: but the vices of the upper class appear to be no less: perhaps they are even greater. The original stain affected all alike: how happens it, once more, that the baptism of civilization has not been equally efficacious for all? Does this not show that progress itself is a privilege, and that the man who has neither wagon nor horse is forced to flounder about for ever in the mud? What do I say? The totally destitute man has no desire to improve: he has fallen so low that ambition even is extinguished in his heart.

"Of all the private virtues," observes M. Dunoyer with infinite reason, "the most necessary, that which gives us all the others in succession, is the passion for well-being, is the violent desire to extricate one's self from misery and abjection, is that spirit of emulation and dignity which does not permit men to rest content with an inferior situation. . . . But this sentiment, which seems so natural, is unfortunately much less common than is thought. There are few reproaches which the generality of men deserve less than that which ascetic moralists bring against them

of being too fond of their comforts: the opposite reproach might be brought against them with infinitely more justice. . . . There is even in the nature of men this very remarkable feature, that the less their knowledge and resources, the less desire they have of acquiring these. The most miserable savages and the least enlightened of men are precisely those in whom it is most difficult to arouse wants, those in whom it is hardest to inspire the desire to rise out of their condition; so that man must already have gained a certain degree of comfort by his labor, before he can feel with any keenness that need of improving his condition, of perfecting his existence, which I call the love of well-being."[1]

Thus the misery of the laboring classes arises in general from their lack of heart and mind, or, as M. Passy has said somewhere, from the weakness, the inertia of their moral and intellectual faculties. This inertia is due to the fact that the said laboring classes, still half savage, do not have a sufficiently ardent desire to ameliorate their condition: this M. Dunoyer shows. But as this absence of desire is itself the effect of misery, it follows that misery and apathy are each other's effect and cause, and that the proletariat turns in a circle.

To rise out of this abyss there must be either well-being, — that is, a gradual increase of wages, — or intelligence and courage, — that is, a gradual development of faculties: two things diametrically opposed to the degradation of soul and body which is the natural effect of the division of labor. The misfortune of the proletariat, then, is wholly providential, and to undertake to extinguish it in the present state of political economy would be to produce a revolutionary whirlwind.

For it is not without a profound reason, rooted in the loftiest considerations of morality, that the universal conscience, expressing itself by turns through the selfishness of the rich and the apathy of the proletariat, denies a reward to the man whose whole function is that of a lever and spring. If, by some impossibility, material well-being could fall to the lot of the *parcellaire* laborer, we should see something monstrous happen: the laborers employed at disagreeable tasks would become like those Romans, gorged with the wealth of the world, whose brutalized

[1] "The Liberty of Labor," Vol. II, p. 80.

minds became incapable of devising new pleasures. Well-being without education stupefies people and makes them insolent: this was noticed in the most ancient times. *Incrassatus est, et recalcitravit,* says Deuteronomy. For the rest, the *parcellaire* laborer has judged himself: he is content, provided he has bread, a pallet to sleep on, and plenty of liquor on Sunday. Any other condition would be prejudicial to him, and would endanger public order.

At Lyons there is a class of men who, under cover of the monopoly given them by the city government, receive higher pay than college professors or the head-clerks of the government ministers: I mean the porters. The price of loading and unloading at certain wharves in Lyons, according to the schedule of the *Rigues* or porters' associations, is thirty centimes per hundred kilogrammes. At this rate, it is not seldom that a man earns twelve, fifteen, and even twenty francs a day: he only has to carry forty or fifty sacks from a vessel to a warehouse. It is but a few hours' work. What a favorable condition this would be for the development of intelligence, as well for children as for parents, if, of itself and the leisure which it brings, wealth was a moralizing principle! But this is not the case: the porters of Lyons are to-day what they always have been, drunken, dissolute, brutal, insolent, selfish, and base. It is a painful thing to say, but I look upon the following declaration as a duty, because it is the truth: one of the first reforms to be effected among the laboring classes will be the reduction of the wages of some at the same time that we raise those of others. Monopoly does not gain in respectability by belonging to the lowest classes of people, especially when it serves to maintain only the grossest individualism. The revolt of the silk-workers met with no sympathy, but rather hostility, from the porters and the river population generally. Nothing that happens off the wharves has any power to move them. Beasts of burden fashioned in advance for despotism, they will not mingle with politics as long as their privilege is maintained. Nevertheless, I ought to say in their defence that, some time ago, the necessities of competition having brought their prices down, more social sentiments began to awaken in these gross natures: a few more reductions seasoned with a little poverty, and the *Rigues* of Lyons

will be chosen as the storming-party when the time comes for assaulting the bastilles.

In short, it is impossible, contradictory, in the present system of society, for the proletariat to secure well-being through education or education through well-being. For, without considering the fact that the proletaire, a human machine, is as unfit for comfort as for education, it is demonstrated, on the one hand, that his wages continually tend to go down rather than up, and, on the other, that the cultivation of his mind, if it were possible, would be useless to him; so that he always inclines towards barbarism and misery. Every thing that has been attempted of late years in France and England with a view to the amelioration of the condition of the poor in the matters of the labor of women and children and of primary instruction, unless it was the fruit of some hidden thought of radicalism, has been done contrary to economic ideas and to the prejudice of the established order. Progress, to the mass of laborers, is always the book sealed with the seven seals; and it is not by legislative misconstructions that the relentless enigma will be solved.

For the rest, if the economists, by exclusive attention to their old routine, have finally lost all knowledge of the present state of things, it cannot be said that the socialists have better solved the antinomy which division of labor raised. Quite the contrary, they have stopped with negation; for is it not perpetual negation to oppose, for instance, the uniformity of *parcellaire* labor with a so-called variety in which each one can change his occupation ten, fifteen, twenty times a day at will?

As if to change ten, fifteen, twenty times a day from one kind of divided labor to another was to make labor synthetic; as if, consequently, twenty fractions of the day's work of a manual laborer could be equal to the day's work of an artist! Even if such industrial vaulting was practicable, — and it may be asserted in advance that it would disappear in the presence of the necessity of making laborers responsible and therefore functions personal, — it would not change at all the physical, moral, and intellectual condition of the laborer; the dissipation would only be a surer guarantee of his incapacity and, consequently, his dependence. This is admitted, moreover, by the organizers, communists, and others. So far are they from pretending to solve

the antinomy of division that all of them admit, as an essential condition of organization, the hierarchy of labor, — that is, the classification of laborers into *parcellaires* and generalizers or organizers, — and in all utopias the distinction of capacities, the basis or everlasting excuse for inequality of goods, is admitted as a pivot. Those reformers whose schemes have nothing to recommend them but logic, and who, after having complained of the *simplism*, monotony, uniformity, and extreme division of labor, then propose a *plurality* as a SYNTHESIS, — such inventors, I say, are judged already, and ought to be sent back to school.

But you, critic, the reader undoubtedly will ask, what is your solution? Show us this synthesis which, retaining the responsibility, the personality, in short, the specialty of the laborer, will unite extreme division and the greatest variety in one complex and harmonious whole.

My reply is ready: Interrogate facts, consult humanity; we can choose no better guide. After the oscillations of value, division of labor is the economic fact which influences most perceptibly profits and wages. It is the first stake driven by Providence into the soil of industry, the starting-point of the immense triangulation which finally must determine the right and duty of each and all. Let us, then, follow our guides, without which we can only wander and lose ourselves.

Tu longe sequere, et vestigia semper adora.