

diminished. It is not well that the proprietors in a community should be few. Ownership, responsibility, the consciousness of being one's own master, foster manliness, and tend to the development of character. It is true, if all men were proprietors, the interests of industry might suffer; but if only a *very few* were such, it would suffer still more. We should seek as far as possible to avoid the evils incident to either extreme.

3. A third disadvantage, though closely connected with the second, is more serious than either of the others. In the minute subdivisions which characterize our modern industry, there is a hinderance to mental growth, — a contracting and belittling influence hard to resist. When a workman works all day, and day after day, boring holes or turning spindles, or cutting the same patterns with a jig-saw, it requires much effort both in and out of work-hours to keep the mind from a deterioration of which it is sad to think. I can scarcely conceive how any man of even moderate intelligence can be content to confine himself for any considerable time to such sterile operations. It is true, that, under the conditions which such division of labor implies, there are found certain compensations. First, by this means, men are brought into communication with one another more than they would otherwise be. Information is thus gained, inquiries suggested, and thought excited. All this is every way wholesome. Secondly, the very fact that many of these minute operations can be performed with but little draught on the mind, and some of them almost automatically, implies mental leisure in which thought can go on simultaneously with work. If the vacant hours be only moderately improved, culture and development need not be wholly wanting.

CHAPTER VII.

CONDITIONS OF HIGHEST PRODUCTION (*continued*).

1. CLOSELY connected with the subject of combination and division of labor, is that of the *diversification of industry*. Upon this depends to no small extent the measure of the productiveness of a community. There is a somewhat prevalent doctrine which is antagonistic to this. It is, that the principle of the division of labor should apply to separate communities, as well as to the different individuals of the same community. This doctrine is more frequently implied than explicitly stated.

It is obvious enough, that each community should devote itself to such industries as it can on the whole pursue to the best advantage; that it should not cherish those which it cannot thus pursue. In other words, no industry should be supported *merely* for the sake of the industry. But neither, on the other hand, should distribution of industries to different communities be practised for the sake of this distribution. It is obvious, that, in proportion as such a distribution takes place, there must be a diminution of the diversity in each several community. If each society should confine itself to the production of two or three commodities, it must depend on other societies to furnish it with most of the articles which it may need. It has already been shown that the association, combination, and commerce, so essential to

the prosperity if not to the existence of a community, can exist only where there are differences; and that these differences must exist in part in modes and forms of production. Hence to locate the differing individuals in separate communities, and to cultivate a similarity in each, would be to put commerce at a disadvantage, and to rob men of the vast benefits of one chief element of their constitution.

2. In every considerable community there are a great number of diverse tastes and aptitudes, many of which cannot be easily adjusted except to particular employments; and unless these exist, a large proportion of the labor-force will be either unapplied, or so applied as to lose much of its legitimate effect.

It is not only that more and better work will be done, and therefore that greater productiveness will ensue, but there are a thousand things done which would otherwise fail of accomplishment, and a thousand things utilized which would otherwise be wasted. A manufacturing community in the midst of an agricultural region not only furnishes immediate exchange which must otherwise be sought at great expense of time and transportation, but it furnishes a market for scores of commodities which, remote from such a community, would be substantially valueless. Few are aware how great is the number of objects which at a distance from towns and cities are comparatively useless, but which in their immediate vicinity would constitute a source of wealth.

Agriculture, in an extended section where it is nearly the exclusive business, is ever an employment of diminishing profit. The land wears out, and the waste both of labor and capital is prodigious. It is a remarkable fact, that famines are more frequent and more appalling in exclusively or chiefly agricultural regions than anywhere else. We can hardly conceive of a famine as possible in our Eastern States

or in England; but in the most fertile regions of the West, twice within the last twenty-five years there have been extensive and disastrous famines. This is necessarily incidental to an exclusively agricultural community. If there be but a single staple production, and that fails, the entire resources fail; but if there be many industries, not all nor even a majority of them are likely to collapse at the same time.

But this is only one aspect of the evil implied in a small number of industries. A doctrine already presented is, that no one occupation furnishes scope for more than a small fraction of the varied talent existing in a community. "If four millions are obliged to be rude laborers, when three millions of them might be skilled artisans, the labor of one of the latter being supposed to be equal in value to three of the former, then the value actually created is to the value which might be created as four is to ten: in other words, the yearly product of the national industry might be two and a half times greater than it is, and the yearly unproductive consumption need not be at all increased; since, in either case, there would be four millions of people to be supplied with food and clothing and shelter."¹

3. Another condition of increased production is unrestricted labor, and freedom of competition. But this freedom must be real and practical, not merely theoretical. The power of the members of the community to associate must not be hindered, in order to the healthy circulation previously mentioned. To assure and preserve this freedom, is one of the functions of government. It should protect each member of society against fraud and violence. It cannot furnish labor, or create capital; it cannot repeal the laws of nature, or enact new ones. But it may guard against

¹ Bowen's Political Economy, pp. 84, 85.

the destruction of the operation of these laws by artificial and vicious measures devised by selfish men. It may do something, at least, to discourage and limit combinations which would attempt to monopolize advantages in the interest of the few, to the exclusion of the many for whom they were intended, — schemes to prevent free and natural competition, and to force labor and capital into unnatural channels, to the detriment of the great masses of producers and consumers. It may take any available means to thwart any movement of interested foreign parties to overwhelm and destroy the nascent industries of its own citizens, as they come into competition with those of the former.

4. An important condition of increasing productiveness is found in *general education*. The utility of education in its relation to human society is twofold. First, a certain degree of intelligence in the masses of the citizens is essential to the success, or even the existence, of a republican form of government. But the discussion of the subject in this respect belongs rather to the department of civil polity than to that of political economy.

The economical advantage of education consists in the skill, discernment, and discrimination which it gives a man for his work; the ability to adapt means to ends; and, in a word, power over nature, so that he can the more readily avail himself of her resources, and command her services. Obviously every increase of this power is an increase of productive capability.

It has always been admitted, that such native or acquired intellectual ability as enables one to discover new forces in nature, or to apply these in the industries, or to make new combinations of forces already known, is a vast and valuable aid to production. Not less is the estimate to be put on the talent to organize and manage great business enter-

prises, so as to make the co-operation of labor and capital in them advantageous. Yet it is probable that the benefits thus resulting from education have been largely underestimated. The increase of power furnished by nature through the discoveries of science, and through human invention, is altogether incalculable. The steam-power of Great Britain, years ago, was estimated to be equal to the labor of six hundred millions of men. Thus in one little island, containing less than one-fortieth of the population of the earth, there has been developed a mechanical power equal to nearly or quite the whole human working-force of the planet! This is only one of the contributions to human productiveness by educated mind. Yet much of this discovery comes from moderately educated men engaged in manual labor.

There is another fact concerning education in relation to labor, which is worthy of note. It is, that the most ordinary education adds to the efficiency of the most ordinary laborer. Even a ditch-digger will do better work by reason of a rudimentary education. In all the rising grades of employments, the more intelligent the laborer, — other things being equal, — the more effective the labor. Usually, too, when the laborer is even moderately educated, he is more likely to be frugal and prudent; and, while producing more, he saves a larger part of that which is produced, thus effecting a double increase of the capital of the community. It also adds to his self-respect, and furnishes a motive to seek a competence and independence, and so, in several ways, contributes to the end for which it has inspired the hope.

It is true, that, as education increases, the desires of men multiply, and the consumption will be greater. But consumption will increase less rapidly than production from this cause. Then, too, the increased desires are in themselves

a stimulus to exertion, and tend to create a larger demand for the results of labor. Thus there is no assignable limit to the multiplication of human desires creating a demand for those results of human effort whereby these desires are gratified.

5. Finally, the productiveness of a community depends in no small degree on the *moral character* of its members. In order to any considerable productiveness, as we have seen, there must be association, combination, and mutual dependence. In order that these may exist, men must have confidence in each other. There must be individual honor, integrity, fidelity, or this cannot exist. Then, again, unless there be security for property, men will have neither much inducement to labor nor much incentive to save in order to accumulate capital. In proportion as morality is at a low grade, as fraud and violence are rife, or as speculation and swindling prevail among officials, and public trusts are betrayed, will enterprise languish, capital seek safer localities, and thriftless poverty become the characteristic of the community. On the other hand, where integrity and uprightness abound in the society, there will be security to property, capital will not need to be so vigorously hedged about with expensive safeguards, labor will superintend itself at a great saving of cost, and all the interests of the community will feel the favorable effect.

BOOK SECOND.

CONSUMPTION.