

upon the welfare of their fellow-countrymen, in a spirit of amity, peace, and concord. We learn in this way to correct many of our own opinions; and at all events to respect the opinions of others who differ from us. I hope that this second decade upon which we are now entering will be characterised by a still greater amount of prosperity than that which attached to the past; that our members will increase in numbers; that the number and quality of our communications will also increase and improve; that the discussions will continue be conducted with temper and ability; and if such be the result, no one will be more rejoiced than he who has had the honor of occupying your chair this evening.

III.—*Equitable Villages in America.*—By Richard Hussey Walsh, Esq., LL.D., late Whately Professor of Political Economy in the Dublin University.

[Read before the Section of Statistics and Economic Science at the meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science held at Dublin in August, 1857.]

At the meeting of the British Association at Glasgow, the year before last, the subject of equitable villages in America was brought forward by Mr. W. Pare, in a paper which has since been published in London by the Statistical Society.* The essay is principally taken up with an account of the views of two American writers, Mr. Josiah Warren, and Mr. Stephen Pearl Andrews, as to what constitutes the welfare of human society, and how it is to be attained,—a social problem which, having solved to their own satisfaction on paper, they proceeded to test by an experiment upon a small number of persons who shared their opinions. This little community took up their abode in Long Island, in the state of New York; and the “equitable village,” as the establishment was generally described, they christened with the distinctive denomination of “Modern Times.” Other “equitable villages,” it was stated, were founded in various parts of the United States upon the same principle as “Modern Times,” and the general impression sought to be conveyed appeared to be that the movement was of a successful and important character.

The views of Messrs. Warren and Andrews appeared to me so extravagant that I should not have thought of them any further were it not that it was announced that they had been adopted in practice for several years, and, apparently, worked successfully, since no intimation to the contrary was thrown out. Under these circumstances, a certain amount of weight would be given to the theory with many who, wanting either leisure or inclination for following out a course of scientific investigation, prefer estimating

* Journal of the Statistical Society, June, 1856.

the amount of reliance to be placed upon this by the supposed agreement or disagreement of the results it indicates with those which actually take place, and repeat continually that "one fact is worth a thousand arguments." This is a line of proceeding which would not be so objectionable as it is if the alleged fact were always a real one, and were it not also that the habit of relying solely on an *experimentum crucis* confirms many in an aversion to taking the trouble of exerting their reasoning faculties. The consequence is that for want of exercise these fail to acquire acuteness; while had they been rendered keen by practice they might frequently have afforded a ready clue to the result, when serious, perhaps insurmountable difficulties prevented us from discovering how the fact actually stood.

It is not my intention to enter upon a history of the minute and perplexing details of the system supported by Messrs. Warren and Andrews. Though I can safely join the author of the paper read at Glasgow in the assertion that "I do not profess to be able to defend all the principles enunciated;" yet I cannot adopt in any instance his statement regarding himself, and say that "I should find it difficult to confute any." On the contrary, the principles in general appear so unsound, and the precepts so mischievous, as to be difficult of confutation on no other grounds than those on which it is hard to encounter a person in controversy who denies that one and one make two. I shall, therefore, not enter into the details of the system, but content myself with furnishing one example of the grounds on which I was first induced to form an unfavourable conclusion respecting it.

One of the principles by which it is proposed to solve the social problem of the attainment of the *summum bonum* is that involved in the dogma that "cost should be the limit of price,"—a principle interpreted as meaning that individuals should exchange their goods in proportion to the labour expended in their acquisition, and that if they act otherwise, their conduct amounts to extortion. Thus when persons, suppose corn-dealers, ask a higher price than usual for food in time of scarcity, more than is sufficient to defray the cost of production, they stand condemned as practising extortion according to the cost principle, and their conduct is likened by Messrs. Warren and Andrews to that of a wheelwright who should ask a great deal more than usual for repairing a waggon broken down on the road, at a distance from any other artificer, if he knew that the owner, by missing the ship for which the waggon-load was destined, would be a heavy loser were the repairs not executed at once. In this comparison we find two things confounded which are altogether different both in origin and result. In the case of a scarcity of food, a rise of price is the consequence of there being less than usual of the article to be sold; the consequence, in fact, of an utter inability on the part of the dealers to supply as much food as usual. But the rise in the other case is unaccompanied by any unusual difficulty in rendering the service required, and is solely a speculation on the peculiar inconvenience which the waggon-owner would undergo if the repairs he required were not executed. So much for the difference in origin between a legitimate rise of price and

extortion; now as to the difference in effect. If the rise of price did not take place in the first instance, the deficient supply of food would be consumed at the usual rate, and so come to an end before the new supplies were available, and thus entail starvation on the community. But by raising the price in time, this consequence is averted, the consumers being compelled by the dearness of food to put themselves on short commons, and so husband the deficient supply as to make it last the entire season.

Now turn to the case of the wheelwright, and it will be seen that here the supposed rise of price effects no useful purpose. The only result is that the waggon-owner pays more than usual for the repairs, and the wheelwright gains in proportion at the expense of his customer; and his extra gain and the customer's loss are but the result of the peculiar advantage acquired for the moment by the one owing to the unexpected misfortune of the other.

If the public stigmatize such conduct by the appellation of extortion, I can see no grounds for questioning their vote of censure; yet according to Messrs. Warren and Andrews the rise of price is to be condemned as much in the one case as the other, and "equitable commerce" prohibits alike the dealer from selling his produce any dearer than usual, merely because it happens to be scarce,* and the wheelwright from charging more than usual just because his customer happens to be in difficulties. Those who can fall into such a glaring error regarding one of the admirable contrivances by which society is protected against the worst effects of scarcity, afford a most decisive proof of their incompetency as guides to human material welfare.

So much for the "cost principle" of the founders of the American Equitable Villages. Their doctrines as to "individuality," the "sovereignty of every individual," "adaptation of the supply to the demand," and "a circulating medium founded on the cost of labour," are as unsound in principle as they have been found mischievous in practice. It is easy to imagine the disturbed state of a community in which the "sovereignty of every individual" is admitted; the views of the several sovereigns often pointing to objects unattainable simultaneously, and each of the kings being unwilling to sacrifice his own prerogative in favour of that of any of his royal neighbours. And great as is the confusion introduced into the political world by the "sovereignty principle," perhaps even yet more would be communicated to the commercial world by the proposed circulating medium. This currency is based on the notion that the function of money is to create wealth, not to exchange and measure it; and any attempt to carry it out must be looked upon as just as foolish as an endeavour to cool the tropics, or warm the arctic regions, by making a thermometer to point to 50° instead of 100° or zero.

* Strictly speaking, even on the cost principle, a rise of price is legitimate in time of scarcity, the supply being obtained at a greater relative cost than usual, in the proportion of a deficient to an average crop. But it is known by experience that the rise of price which actually takes place on such occasions, and which, moreover, must take place in order that consumption be kept within the bounds of supply, is far greater than in the proportion of the deficiency.

The proceeding affords an example of the several circumstances which originally induced me to believe that "Modern Times" and similar institutions could not prove successful. I was not then aware that their career had never been otherwise than struggling and that "Modern Times" had turned out a failure about two years before the attention of the British Association had been directed to it at Glasgow as an experiment under trial. This information was obtained in reply to some questions I circulated respecting "Modern Times," and to which, after some time, through the kind assistance of a friend, answers were furnished by Mr. John Metcalfe,* one of the earliest settlers in that village. Letters from Mr. Edger, also one of the inhabitants of "Modern Times," and from the Rev. Mr. Channing, a nephew of the celebrated author of the same name, have likewise been communicated to me.† While all agree as to the result of the experiment, there is some little disagreement as to the opinions entertained of one of the founders of the system; Mr. Channing, who seems to have known Mr. Warren, but at a distance from the scene of his labours, expressing himself more favourably with respect to him than Mr. Edger, who had the benefit, if benefit it can be called, of a closer personal acquaintance.

It appears from Mr. Metcalfe's account that some of the inhabitants have grown ashamed even of the name of their village, and sign their address by that of the neighbouring railway station, Thomson. And most will be of opinion their scruples are not ill-founded; for from an observation made in the course of the answer to a question as to the progress of "Modern Times," we learn that unsettled notions respecting the domestic relations rendered it difficult to divide the population into families.

With respect to the chief object of inquiry, that relating to the success or otherwise of the experiment adopted to test the soundness of Mr. Warren's social principles, Mr. Metcalfe announces a complete failure; a failure, moreover, which it appears had led to the entire abandonment of the experiment, as before stated, about two years before it had been brought under the notice of the British Association as one in course of being tested. In another village, appropriately termed "Utopia," (the only one besides, according to Mr. Metcalfe, in which it was attempted to carry out Mr. Warren's views,) the result was not dissimilar; and the inhabitants, like those of "Modern Times," seem to have grown ashamed of the folly of their leaders, and conformed themselves again to the usages of civilized society.

In dealing with social questions there are two faults of an opposite character, which often are committed. Some oppose everything new that is brought forward, merely because it is different from what they have been accustomed to previously. This weakness happily is dying out among enlightened nations, and it is no longer thought reasonable to reject a project, theoretically sustainable, only because the wisdom of our ancestors affords no precedent. But often we escape from one danger only to fall into another, and at present social reformers more frequently run into the opposite extreme.

* See Appendix A.

† See Appendix B.

They are too ready to assume that whatever is sanctioned by ancient usage or conviction must therefore in all probability be wrong; whilst they are prone to adopt any new theory brought forward, provided it be sufficiently at variance with received notions of social economy or morality.

APPENDIX A.*

[Introductory statement, and questions forwarded in circular inquiring for information respecting "Equitable Villages in America;" with replies, dated 16th January, 1856, by Mr. John Metcalfe, an inhabitant of one of the villages, "Modern Times."]

ABOUT five years ago there was founded, in Long Island, State of New York, what is called an "Equitable Village,"—an institution embodying a new form of society stated to have been invented by Mr. Josiah Warren, and now sought to be reduced to practice. In other parts of the United States, it is alleged, there are several more "Equitable Villages" scattered up and down. That at Long Island is known by the distinctive title of "Modern Times."

Q. (1.) Is this last named village still in existence?

A. The village of Modern Times still exists, and is recorded by that name, although some of its inhabitants suppress it, signing their address merely Thomson, the name of the adjacent railway station.

It is now six years since first I commenced as pioneer in the building operations upon the wild lands, which to all appearance had never before been disturbed.

Q. (2.) If still in existence, how is the village of Modern Times progressing?

A. The village progressed for about three years to the number of about seventy-five individuals. I do not state the number of families, because the unsettled notions prevailing on that subject at that time rendered it difficult to ascertain which were really families. Since that time the population has rather decreased.

As to the principles of Josiah Warren, which this village was expressly designed to carry into practice, they have for the last two years been wholly abandoned by all the inhabitants.

Q. (3.) If Modern Times is not in operation as an Equitable Village, what are the particulars relating to its failure?

A. The particulars of this failure would form quite a history; but it does not seem to me desirable to preserve or recall them. It was the anarchical ideas of its founders which caused its failure. A full opportunity was offered to test these principles, which have been stated to be the invention of Josiah Warren, although he does not lay claim to that, but only to the discovery of them.

Q. (4.) Can answers to questions corresponding to the preceding three be supplied concerning other "Equitable Villages"?

A. There is but one other village which attempted to carry out

* Vide page 163, *supra*.

Mr. Warren's views. This was called Utopia, situated near Cincinnati; but the inhabitants do not desire any publicity; indeed the name of the village was represented as being "Trialville" at one time. I have heard nothing of this village for some years. I do not know that there is now anything peculiar to distinguish it from any other village.

The other attempts to apply this principle in storekeeping, &c., have all failed.

APPENDIX B.*

[Extracts from letters on the subject of "Modern Times" from the Rev. Mr. Channing, and Mr. Henry Edger.]

In justice to Mr. Warren I publish an extract from the Rev. Mr. Channing's letter. The writer, a nephew of the celebrated Dr. Channing, dates from Liverpool, October 8th, 1856; and after regretting his inability to furnish the information sought for respecting Modern Times, proceeds as follows:—

"Josiah Warren is a very clever enterprising man, much in earnest in his schemes, and entirely convinced that he knows how to hang the world on its axle, adjust the gearing, put on steam, and turn out model men to order. But as I always have had a notion that society is a living organization and not a machine, however cunningly contrived, I have never taken much interest in his movements. My impression is that 'Modern Times' was broken up by what is called the 'Free-love' agitation, but I do not recall the facts."

Mr. Edger's letter is not very favourable to the founders of "Modern Times," and it derives weight from the fact that he writes from the scene of action, with all that intimate knowledge, both of the men and their system, which he has acquired by dearly bought experience. The letter is dated February 16th, 1857, and in the following extract some interesting information is conveyed concerning the progress of the movement, and the antecedents of the leaders:—

[Extract from letter of Henry Edger, Esq., of "Modern Times," dated 16th February, 1857, Long Island.]

"My socialism was hardly of the kind to be taken in with Josiah Warren's quackery; but it was not he alone who founded this 'Modern Times' village. Stephen Pearl Andrews, a literary adventurer of New York city, a man who I think always sincerely believes himself just on the eve of accomplishing something great, stumbled over this Warren—quite an ignorant mechanic by-the-by, and but a middling workman into the bargain—and after some conversation with him, took it into his head that he had at last found his long-expected mare's nest.

"The manner in which Andrews works out his scheme, 'demonstrating' (as he calls it) the practical results of 'equity,' developing all the 'economics of the larger scale'—the 'unitary household,' the association 'baby world,' and 'integral education,' and everything else that socialists and 'associationists' have ever dreamed of—flows naturally and easily out of the mere operation of the 'cost principle' and the 'labour-note,' and is certainly ingenious. To a philosophical mind it is at once evidently empirical, but I was by no means philosophical; and although I could see many difficulties I was ready to take them for granted on the faith of the easy solution Andrews assured me he was going to work out. So I came down here, (in the spring of 1851,) bought an acre of land and set to work within a month of my arrival at New York.

* Vide page 163, supra.

"For my first industrial mistakes I do not at all hold Andrews and 'Modern Times' responsible. But it was not long before this new apostle and leader quenched even my veneration, which, I am sure, you will be very ready to believe was quite sufficient to satisfy all reasonable demands, by his blended dogmatism and incapacity. For his theoretical errors and moral failings he must be responsible, and 'Modern Times' and 'equitable commerce' must certainly be added to the long list of Mr. Andrew's *total failures*. I must tell you more about this 'Modern Times' hereafter, if necessary. For the present probably what my friend John Metcalfe, the first settler here, has said in the enclosed note may suffice with the above for your friend's information.

"Even in our small population of less than a hundred, the hostile element, new and old, consisting of settlers altogether external to the corresponding social movement, was such that at a recent local election the 'Modern Times' part was decidedly out-voted. It expects some new recruits in the coming spring, but its very principle of 'individualism' necessarily paralyses it, so that it takes but the smallest external resistance to utterly rout it.

"The absence of all organization, the fact that each 'individual' has had to come to 'Modern Times' on his own responsibility, and settle himself here as he best could, prevents any open dislocation of the *movement*, such as it is. There is nothing to be 'broken up,' come what may. There could in any case be only a more or less gradual change in the character of the population. During the first few years the population was constantly shifting. The greater proportion, ten to one, of all the persons ever drawn towards 'Modern Times' have, sooner or later, given up their attempt in despair, discouraged and driven back by the disheartening material difficulties connected in part with the peculiar locality, but principally with the chimerical character of their ideas."

IV.—*On the necessity for prompt measures for the suppression of Intemperance and Drunkenness.*—By James Haughton, Esq.

[A Paper read before the Statistical section of the British Association in Dublin, on the 31st August, 1857.]

GENTLEMEN,

As this Association has been founded to discover and make available for human happiness, those scientific or natural laws, which are the basis of all order and improvement, and upon the due observance of which any great advance in civilization depends, I venture to bring under your notice a question of as deep importance to man's present and future condition and prospects, as any other which could engage your attention. Indeed, I believe there is no other question in science or morals which so forcibly calls on thoughtful men to labour earnestly for its wise and speedy settlement in such a way as to leave the path of future philanthropic and laborious workmen for man's improvement free from the impediments cast in the way of their predecessors for many generations past. I refer to the drinking usages of society.

It would be highly improper for me to occupy your time at any great length with an expression of my opinions as to the evils arising from these usages, and the intemperance and drunkenness which result from them. My purpose is to bring, as strongly as I can within the limited period of time your rules allow of, such a view of these evils as may awaken our members to the necessity for