

## Literature, &amp;c.

The British Magazines  
FOR MAY.From Blackwood's Magazine.  
STATE OF BRITAIN.

[Blackwood for this month opens with an elaborate and highly instructive Review of a recent work by J. C. Simonde de Sismondi, entitled "Etudes des Sciences Sociales," from which we take the following extracts, which will enable our readers to form a very correct idea of the social evils at present existing in the mother country, and to a greater or less extent in all the European states].

It is the fatal and ruinous effect of wealth, thus accumulated in the hands of a few, at the expense of the great bulk of the industrious classes in a state; that tends to perpetuate and increase the diseased and perilous state of society from which it sprang. The common observation, that money makes money, and that poverty breeds poverty, show how universally the experience of mankind has felt that capital, in the long run, gives an overwhelming advantage in the race for riches to the race, and that poverty as uniformly, ere long, gives the vast superiority in numbers to the poor. We often hear of an earl or a merchant-prince mourning the want of an heir, but scarcely ever of a Highland couple or an Irish hovel wanting their overflowing brood of little half-naked savages. We occasionally hear of a poor man raising himself by talent and industry to fortune; but in general he does so only by associating his skill with some existing capital, and giving its owner thus the extraordinary advantage of uniting old wealth with a new discovery. To get on in the world without capital is daily becoming more difficult to the great bulk of men: it is, in trade or commerce, at least, wholly impossible. Thus, as wealth accumulates in the capital and great cities of the empire, destitution, poverty, and, of course, crime and immorality, multiply around the seats where that wealth was originally created. And this evil, so far from abating with the lapse of time, daily increases, and must increase till some dreadful convulsion takes place, and restores the subverted balance of society; because the power of capital, like that of a lever which is continually lengthened, is daily augmenting in the centres of wealth; and the power of numbers in the centres of destitution is hourly on the increase, from the reckless and improvident habits which that destitution has engendered.

The happiness of a nation, its morality, order, and security, are mainly, if not entirely, dependent on the extent to which property with its attendant blessings, and habits of reflection, regularity, and industry, are diffused among the people. But the doctrines of the *Chrematists*, and of nearly the whole school of modern political economists, go almost entirely to uproot this inestimable blessing. The principle being once fixed in men's minds, and acted upon by individual men and the legislature, that the great thing is to diminish the wages of the producers. Every thing which can conduce to that object is vigorously pursued, without the slightest regard to the effect the changes must have on the fortunes, and ultimate fate in life, of whole classes in society. It is thus that, in agriculture, the engrossing of farms takes place—an evil so sorely felt in England during the seventeenth, and in Scotland in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries—and that hundreds and thousands of happy families are dispossessed from their hereditary possessions, to make room for that "devourer of the human race," as the old writers called it, the sheep. It is thus that, in our own times, the small tenants and cotters have been so generally dispossessed in Scotland and Ireland, to make room for the large cultivator or store farmer. It is thus that the race of hand-loom weavers, who carry on their trade in their own houses, and with the advantages of rural residence, gardens, fields, and country air, is every where becoming extinct, or their wages have fallen so low as barely to support existence in the very humblest rank of life. In the room of these sturdy old children of the soil, has sprung up a race of puny operatives and labourers, living by wages, and having no durable connexion either with the land, or even with the capitalist who employs them. Employed at weekly wages, they are constantly on the verge of famine if turned out of their employment. Every thing now is concentrated in huge mills, manufacturing districts, and great towns, where the labour of men is too often supplanted by women, that of women by children, that of children, almost entirely by machinery, on which they attend. The cost of production, indeed, is prodigiously diminished, by the substitute of these feeble or tiny labourers for that of full-grown men; and with it the profits of the masters, and the circle of the export circle, are proportionally augmented; but at what expense is this profit to a few gained? At the expense, in some degree, at least, it is to be feared, of the independence, the comfort, the morals, the lives, of whole classes of the labouring portions of the community.

The application of knowledge to the arts, of science to manufactures, so far from diminishing, has, hitherto at least, had the most ruinous possible effect in increasing this fatal tendency of great capital and extensive manufactured industry upon mankind. Watt, Arkwright, Crompton—those giants of intellectual power, whose discoveries have augmented tenfold,

often an hundred-fold, the productive powers of manufacturing labour—have been the worst enemies that the happiness and morals of the working manufacturers ever knew. For what is it that, by means of great capital, working with the powers which their immortal discoveries have conferred, manufacturing industry has become? Why, it flings all, or nearly all, run into huge mills, or other establishments, in which machinery, at a cost of thirty, forty, or fifty thousand pounds, is erected, and a crowd of needy women and children is employed, in ordinary times, at the lowest wages which can support existence, with a few men at a guinea or twenty five shillings a week, to direct and superintend their labours. It need not be told what the habits of such a crowd of young women, most of them from fourteen to twenty, must in general be. These evils in manufacturing districts are universally felt and complained of; but it is not equally generally admitted, that they arise invariably, and as matters at present stand, inevitably, from that very extension of science and mechanical powers to the arts, which is, in the view of the increase of national wealth, so just a subject of exultation, and which it is so much the object of legislative enactment and of individual ingenuity, to augment and extend. Yet, is not the crushing effect of these great discoveries on the welfare of the labouring classes, as manifest as their elevating influence on the fortunes of their employers, and the sum total of the produce of national manufactured industry? On no other principle is it possible to explain the prodigious accumulation of wealth in one class of the British empire, and of degradation, misery, crime, and destitution in the other, and far more numerous classes.

The division of labour, and the confining of each workman, or workchild, to one limited sphere of employment, while it is productive of a very great increase in the skill which each exerts in his own department, and in consequence augments, in a similar proportion, the net produce of manufactured industry, is still more fatal to the morals, habits, and independence of the manufacturing classes. Variety of occupation is indispensable to vigour of mind and independence of character. The exclusive chaining of the human mind to one employment, even though that employment is of the most intellectual kind, as the duties of the lawyer, the statesman, the physician, or the divine, speedily contracts the understanding, narrows the interest, circumscribes the field of enjoyment, and often hardens the heart. If this is the case, as undoubtedly it is, with those who are exclusively immersed even in the learned professions, which require an exercise of thought, and can be founded only on a long and cultivated education, how much more must it be the case with those whose occupation is purely mechanical, and so trivial that it may be learned in a few days—as twirling a film, twisting a cotton, darning a plate, or drawing a cloth out of a vat? Such operatives are exposed, at every period of their lives, to the greatest evils which can debase humanity—uncertainty of subsistence and monotony of occupation. Their work is so simple, that any one can learn it in a few days—therefore they are exposed to competition with the whole labouring classes of the community; it is so uniform, that it neither requires, nor is compatible with, intellectual elevation—therefore it is speedily made, by the effect of competition for such simple employment, to engross their whole time. Mental improvement, moral or religious cultivation, are scarcely possible to any but the strongest minds united to the strongest bodies, in the circumstances to which the working classes, under such a system, are speedily reduced. If any one doubts this, let him dig, or hoe, or walk along the road, or trundle a hoop, or bear a fowling-piece for twelve hours a day without intermission, save at breakfast and dinner, and then see with what appetite he can take to moral or intellectual improvement when he comes in at night.

It is the deplorable effect of such a state of things, that it tends not merely to perpetuate, but increase, the very evils from which it has arisen, and reduce the working classes to that state, wherein extrication from them is next to impossible. Under the pressure of the ceaseless desire to cheapen production and diminish the cost of manufacture, young persons of both sexes are huddled together into mills and factories, at so early a period of life that they are scarcely fit to leave the nursery. It has recently been found necessary to introduce a special statute to prohibit children being employed in print-fields in England under eight years. They are so because they can at once earn sixpence or eightpence a day by standing beside a wheel, or watching a film of cotton which is discharged out of a machine; and this cheap and infantile labour is equally attractive to the parents, who thus discover in their offspring a source of income instead of a burden—and the manufacturer, who finds his work done by little docile labourers, too weak to engage in a strike, and yet strong enough to do the work. No exertion of strength is required, at least none at any one moment, in many of these occupations—though the work, when long continued, is to the last degree exhausting; the steam engine lifts all the weights and turns all the power. Thus there is, from the necessities and interests of all concerned, a constant demand for juvenile labour; and this demand speedily produces its own supply, by promoting early marriages, or fostering a swarm of bastards among persons thus thrown together, at the period of life when the passions are the strongest, with a total separation at all times, save bed-time, from that only school of virtue, the parental home.

The principle of free competition—of breaking down all barriers—allowing every one to elbow his neighbour out of employment, and bringing everything down to

the cheapest level—has tended only to lower the wages of labour, and aggravate the insecurity of the poor. No one has a fixed or permanent station; every thing is done for day's or week's wages; and the penalty of dismissal is destitution, famine, and a lingering death. Hence the constant complaint now on the part of the poor, that they cannot get work; and the prodigious multitude of the lowest class who are constantly moving about, seeking in one situation that employment they have lost in another. This, however, is of all things the most fatal to their habits, character, and prospects; they get among people to whom they are total strangers, who regard them with aversion as intruders, and are neither inclined to relieve their distresses, nor to facilitate their advance in the world.

It is a sense of the evils arising from this feeling of isolation amidst multitudes, and the experienced inability of the poor, all struggling against each other for subsistence, to resist the progressive decline of their wages till they reach the lowest point consistent with the support of existence, which has made the working classes in France and England of late years so generally embrace, and make such incredible efforts to support trades-unions. They have endeavored, in so doing, to retain that re-organization of crafts in separate classes and bodies, which was overturned amidst the shouts of triumph consequent on the French Revolution. But this attempt, so far from palliating the existing evils, has had the greatest possible tendency to aggravate them; for it has too often vested irresponsible power in hands wholly unfit to yield it. Perhaps the greatest, the most wide-spread, the most acute suffering endured by the labouring poor in Great Britain during the last thirty years, has arisen from strikes. Nothing has tended so strongly to shake society to its centre; to array the working classes against their employers; to spread habits of recklessness, violence, and improvidence among them, and alienate their natural supporters from them by the frightful crimes to which they have given rise.

A nation which has surrendered its government to the commercial classes, and at the same time has a large population and considerable territorial possessions, cannot fail to incur ruin if their rule is long continued. The reason is, that their interest is adverse to that of the most numerous, important, and valuable classes of society; and they never cease to prosecute that interest till they have destroyed them. To import largely is for their interest; therefore, they promote all measures tending to favour the introduction of foreign productions, though their effect must be to depress, and in the end extinguish, native industry. They would have the people pay for these imports by enlarged exports; in other words, they would convert society into a mere appendage of the trading classes. To enlarge these exports, they make the most strenuous effort in every possible way to cheapen production—that is, to lower the wages of labour. Their idea of a perfect society is one in which the labouring classes are reduced to the rank of mere attendants on machines, because that is the cheapest form of production. They would have them attend on these machines at sixpence or eightpence a day, live chiefly on potatoes, and eat no bread but what is imported in foreign vessels, and from foreign countries, because they are cheaper than their own. In this way both exports and imports would be elevated to the highest pitch; for the main part of the national food would figure in the imports, and the main part of national labour in the exports. Mercantile business would come to supersede every other—it alone would be attended with any profit. Meanwhile, domestic industry would languish and decline—the home market would be destroyed—the rural population, the main stay of a nation, gradually withered away and wasted. Poverty and misery would weaken and alienate the working classes; and, amidst a constant increase of exports and imports, and growth of commercial wealth, the nation would be destroyed.

This is no imaginary picture. The ruin of the Roman empire in ancient, the desolation of the Campagna of Rome in modern times, are permanent proofs of its reality.

The Campagna of Rome is the greatest type of the state to which the doctrine of the *Chrematists* would reduce the states of modern Europe. Agriculture, ruined by the perpetual curse of foreign importation; urban industry alone flourishing by the stimulus of foreign export; vast fortunes accumulated in the hands of a few merchants and great proprietors; constant distress among the labouring poor; all the symptoms of prosperity in the cities—all the marks of decay in the country; luxury the most unbounded, side by side with penury the most pinching; an overflow of wealth which cannot find employment, in one class of society; a mass of destitution that seeks in vain for work, in another; a middle class daily diminishing in number and declining in importance, between the two extremes; and government, under the influence of popular institutions, yielding to all the demands of the opulent class, because it gives money; and deaf to all the cries of the impoverished, because they can only ask for bread. The name of slavery is indeed abolished in Western Europe, but is its reality, are its evils, not present? Have we not retained its fetters, its restraints, its degradations, without its obligations to support? Are not the English factory children often practically in a worse servitude than in the eastern harem? If the men are not "ascripti glebæ," are they not "ascripti molinis ac carbonariis?" What trade can a factory girl or coal-mine child take to, if thrown out of employment? The master cannot flog them or bring them back by force to his workshop. Mighty difference! He can starve them if they leave it: he chains them to their mills by the invincible

board of necessity. They have the evils of slavery without its advantages. Can, or ought, such a state of things long continue? Whether this is descriptive of the state of society in France and England, let those determine who are familiar with the people of either of these countries.

[From the same periodical we select the following extracts from a Review of a recent work, entitled "Revelations of Spain," by an English resident, which will give our readers a very excellent idea of the state of affairs in that distracted country.]

## STATE OF SPAIN.

Commencing with the fall of Espartero, the first twenty chapters of the first volume are chiefly political in their nature;—containing explanations of the various circumstances attending the above event; details of the state of parties, of the intrigues against Olozaga, and his final overthrow by the Camarilla of the day; the history of Camarillas generally, and sketches of several of the most prominent actors upon the Spanish political stage. The figurative signification of the word *camarilla*, which, in its literal sense, means a little chamber, is almost too well known, even out of Spain, for an explanation of it to be necessary. Since the fourteenth century, the days of Alvaro the Eleventh, and the beautiful Leonor de Guzman, it has been the wont of Spanish monarchs, with rare exceptions, to rule, and wish to be ruled, by cabals or coteries composed of an indeterminate number of courtiers. We find men of all ranks and classes of society taking in turn their share of this back-stair influence; priests and soldiers, jesuits, nobles, and lawyers, and not unfrequently women, composed the courtier-conclaves that governed the rulers of Spain, sent their own feet to the scaffold or dungeon, and raised their own friends to the highest dignities of the state. In conformity with this time-honored tradition of the Spanish monarchy, no sooner was Espartero expelled from Spain, than Christina hastened to send creatures of her own to Madrid, to watch over her interests pending her own arrival, and to intrigue against those who should appear disposed to thwart her designs and line of policy; to form, in short, a Camarilla. This was soon done. "It was composed of Narvaez, the Marchioness of Santa Cruz, and Valverde, the Duke of Osuna, Juan Donoso Cortes, and a member of the Senate named Calvet—all faithful adherents of Christina, Moderados in their politics, and strongly tinged with absolutist principles, although most hostile to the claims of Don Carlos." These half-dozen intriguing spirits soon carved out for themselves abundant and mischievous employments. The then minister, Lopez, the same whose famous amnesty project caused the downfall of Espartero, alike averse to encounter their opposition or to truckle to them in his government, resigned his office although possessing a strong majority in the Cortes, and Olozaga took his place, having been designated by Lopez as the most fitting man. The new premier trusted to his energetic talents to make head against the Camarilla, but he had underrated the ingenuity and sagacity of the latter; and, still more, the homage borne to him by Queen Christina. This homage he had excited to a deadly extent, when ambassador at Paris in the time of Espartero, by demanding the expulsion of Ferdinand's wife from the French capital, on the ground of her intrigues and attempts to revolutionize Spain. As will be remembered, no attention was paid to these demands by Louis Philippe, who was far better affected towards Christina than Espartero; and the cunning dowager remained snug at the Hotel de Courcelles, hatching plots against the existing government of Spain, and largely aided by French gold and French counsels. But she neither forgot nor forgave Espartero's interference; and no sooner did he assume the reins of government, than her usual vigour opened their batteries upon him with unusual vigour. So effectual was their fire, that Olozaga, who took office on the twenty-first of November, was dismissed from it on the twentieth;—one week's tenure. The absurd history of the violence employed by him to obtain the Queen's signature to a decree for the dissolution of the Cortes is well known, as are also the efforts that were made to crush him, even after his expulsion from the ministry had been obtained by this pitiful pretext—a pretext once disgraceful to the artful and unprincipled framers, and injurious in the highest degree to Queen Isabel, one of whose first acts, after her majority had been declared, was thus made to be the attestation of a gross and shameful falsehood. In the long and stormy debate ensued in the Cortes, Olozaga amply confuted all parties of the absurdity of the charge brought against him, and utterly confounded his enemies. What they could not accomplish by public means, the latter now attempted to bring about by underhanded ones—namely, Olozaga's destruction in a literal as well as a political sense; and after one or two narrow escapes from assassination, the ex-premier was withdrawn from Spain. His friends presented the readiest asylum; and following very nearly the course of the Portuguese exile, escorted by twenty well-armed trabandists, came by way of Talavera and Oporto, on the back of a mule, in the disguise of a trader, with copious saddle-bags, and crossed the little river Herjas into the Portuguese province of Beira, was soon in Castello Branco. Olozaga was used to this sort of thing, having already had to fly for his life in the time of Ferdinand. On that occasion he drove out of Madrid in the disguise of a Calesero, in company with his friend Garcia, the then intendant