

The act has been in a sort of doubt for some years among political economists. We sometimes see very wise heads shaken at it. In spite of everything, it is a heavenly act, well worthy of being placed among religious virtues. There cannot, however, be a doubt that, as matters stand, while it is an elevating act for the giver, it is a deterioration for the receiver. Relieving, as it may be, from the pressure of immediate pains, and justifiable as it may thus be, it also, as we well know, saps still further the moral state of the party relieved. The condition of mendicants everywhere attests the certainty of this effect, so that it fully appears as if that which is a virtue in its motive, were really something like a vice in its consequences. It is a strange dilemma, seeming to imply that heaven itself commands the desertion of the stricken deer. Such, we may well be assured, cannot be the case; but yet, as far as we can readily see, such a thing as unminged good from beneficence is not in the world.

Some years ago, a poor, but reputedly honest tin-smith, living in a country town in Berkshire, was burnt out, and utterly ruined. It was suggested that he should go about amongst the townsfolk, with a subscription paper, in order that he might be re-established in his little business. A gentleman conspicuous in the management of public charities gave him a certificate for this purpose. So furnished, the tin-smith commenced his rounds, and in one week collected five pounds, being probably about the amount of his losses. Surprised, however, at the facility with which money was thus to be obtained, he persevered till he had completed the round of the town, which he effected in about a month. Being now reimbursed four times over, it might have been expected that he would contentedly settle to his business, and beg no more. He was by this time, however, completely fascinated by the new profession he had adopted; so he went with his wife into the country to prosecute his subscription, out of which he is supposed to have made about two hundred a year ever since. The gentleman who gave the certificate, telling us the story, said in conclusion, "My writing that bit of paper was one of the worst actions I ever committed, because it has utterly corrupted two of my fellow-creatures."

A state provision for the poor is, properly speaking, only a regulated mode of almsgiving, an effort towards equalising matters between the fortunate and unfortunate. We all know, however, how endangered, if not lost, is the moral state of those who accept of this succour. It is everywhere reported that, from the moment an independent laborer tastes of public charity, his self-respect is lost, and he is never after so good a man. It is the universally-confirmed dilemma of the administrators how to relieve pressing and real want, without holding out an inducement to the independent laborer to relax in his industry and frugality, under the certainty of sharing at the worst in this public benefaction. The common saying of some is, that the poor's fund makes the poor; and the most generous must allow that there is too much truth in the remark. It is also true that the fund undergoes a continual siege on the part of worthless impostors, who ought to have no business with it. Novelists persist in describing the sufferings of genuine wretchedness at the hands of charity officials; they do not see that incessant deception makes men suspicious, and that nothing but supernatural wisdom could distinguish at a glance between solitary cases of virtuous poverty and the multitude of impostures. A gentleman of perfect humanity, who once took charge of a charitable establishment in a large city, told us that he had had occasion, while in that duty, to examine into ten thousand cases brought before him, and there was not one free from deception! In Glasgow, at the present time, the annual expenditure for the poor is £118,000, mostly in the form of out-door relief. Now, as we have heard much of the misery put up in that city, this seems comfortable news; but stop till we hear a few facts. A single spirit-dealer relates that his receipts for whiskey on the pay-day are always £10 above the average. Scores of the tickets establishing the right to a monthly allowance are pledged to pawnbrokers—how the results are bestowed may be imagined. It has become common for married couples to separate under a paction, that the apparently deserted wife may receive an allowance, part of which she gives to her husband. "The mortifying fact is," says a gentleman officially concerned, "that the paupers abuse the charity to an enormous extent, and notwithstanding all we spend on them, and all our unwearying labors in their behalf, poverty, disease, and death are multiplying their victims, and are not anywise subdued by our exertions."

Humanity is in a similar dilemma regarding criminal prisoners. It desires to treat them leniently, and to win them back, if possible, to better courses. It has therefore dictated the total abolition of those dens of misery which Howard described, and which were such a terror to the well-doing, and has substituted in their place good comfortable houses, where indeed there is restraint, and solitary life, but no want of physical comfort, and nothing that can be felt as very degrading. At the same time, persons of education and humane feelings go to the prisoners, converse with them kindly, and endeavor to fortify them with moral and religious sentiment for their re-encounter with the world out of doors. And what is the consequence?—that jails have ceased to operate so well in deterring from the commission of crime. We may well re-quote the declaration of the chief criminal judge of Scotland upon this subject:—"Even on the separate system, imprisonment has really no terror for the bulk of offenders; and the better the system, it is an undoubted result, that the dread of imprisonment will and must be diminished. After these offenders are all taught to read, and get books to read at extra hours, if reformation is not produced, at least the oppression of imprisonment is over to people of coarse minds, and living a life of wretchedness out of prison. And hence I am sorry to say, that with those who are not reclaimed in our prison, the dread of imprisonment seems to have entirely vanished. And I understand that among the community at large in Scotland, and with magistrates and police officers, the feeling is very general that, owing to the comforts necessarily attending a good jail, the separate system, looked on first with alarm, has now no effect in deterring from crime those who are not reformed." What a triumph, to all appearance, for the old harsh flogging system! To it we cannot return—we are too refinedly mild now—days for that; endless newspaper articles would dia the public sin into our ears continually, till the philanthropic plan was resumed. But the inappropriateness of this plan to its object remains nevertheless palpable. We leave the poor man's home undisturbed in its wretchedness, and hold out a comfortable jail, as if to wile him from the paths of rectitude. Even our efforts to reform the prisoners, the best-meant part of the whole system, are attended with difficulties. The poor independent man out of doors sees the criminal thus obtaining a degree of attention from his superiors, and exciting an interest in them, which must have something agreeable about it. I cannot be encouraging for his virtue to reflect that, while he remains virtuous, no such care is taken of him, and no such interest expressed about his fate.

Is there a solution for these dilemmas of humanity? We think there must be, for otherwise, we should have to deny that predominating rule of good which appears in the whole of the providential arrangements of the world. These difficulties, it appears to us, are only inseparable from a system in which man's nature remains unregenerate in its active selfishness. Were the Christian aim realised, and we all did really love our neighbor as ourselves, there would be no exaltation in the rendering of a favor, and no debasement in receiving it. The selfishness extinguished on both sides, we should feel in these matters exactly as parents and children do in their intercommunication of good offices. The very idea of gratitude would be extirpated, as something not necessary to the case. The giver and the receiver of common charity would alike feel that they were working out the will of God, and it would be as blessed to take as to give, because both acts were essential to the realisation of the Divine decree. Probe all humane dilemmas, and you will find that selfishness is at the bottom of them. If we were not each so much for ourselves, there would be less of crime, and no such problem as that of the jails would exist. The remedy is a change of our feelings to the effect of making all others' interests as dear to us as our own. A remote one, you will say. True; but it may not be the less certain that, till it is realised, dilemmas must continue to beset all benevolent designs.

#### TEMPERANCE LYRIC.

*Suited to a popular air, and intended to be sung at Soirees, or other entertainments of the evening.*

#### THE TEMPERANCE TREE.

A thriving plant is the Temperance Tree;  
That spreadeth its branches wide;  
Long may it hale and flourishing be,  
Though heaviest storms betide;  
Though years roll over, relentless time shall  
work no slow decay;  
Unarmed, uplifting its head sublime,  
And welcome as the flowers in May,  
Fruitful, vigorous, fadeless, free,—  
A thriving plant is the Temperance Tree.

Thousands are gathered beneath its shade,  
And daily their voices sing  
With heartfelt thanks for the glad homes made,  
The joys which from Temperance spring;  
Though foes endeavor its growth to stay, their  
efforts shall fruitless prove,  
Still blooming 'mid storms, shall its branches  
play,  
While cherished by virtue and love;  
Fruitful, vigorous, fadeless, free,—  
A thriving plant is the Temperance Tree.

'Twas planted by reason on virtuous soil;  
By tears of penitence fed;  
Kind heaven hath smiled on the work of toil,  
And genial sunbeams shed;  
Its growth is spreading o'er land and sea; and  
every foreign clime  
Shall taste the fruits of the Temperance  
Tree,  
That tree that defies old time;  
Fruitful, vigorous, fadeless, free,—  
A thriving plant is the Temperance Tree.

A wag purchased a very fine horse. Returning from a ride a few days afterwards, he said he had discovered a quality which added five pounds to his value; "he shied at a constable."

"When I am making a plea of consequence," says Lord Bolingbroke, "I always like to consult a sensible woman." Lord Bolingbroke was a great man.

## The Politician.

### THE NAVIGATION LAWS.

From the London Morning Herald.

#### IMPORTANT DEPUTATION TO THE PREMIER ON THE NAVIGATION LAWS.

There are few men in Great Britain who do not know the firm of Pollock and Gilmour. They own one hundred British ships averaging five hundred tons each. Mr Allan Gilmour was the spokesman of a deputation from the Clyde, who waited on Lord John Russell on Monday last to remonstrate against the Navigation Bill of Mr Labouchere. How Lord John Russell could, on the same evening, have spoken in favor of the Labouchere affair after the address of Mr Gilmour is to us matter of astonishment. The following are extracts from Mr Gilmour's speech:

In our opinion, my Lord, we consider that legislation on this great interest was uncalled for, and quite unnecessary at the present time; for there is no want of British tonnage, and freights are abundantly moderate in all parts of the world. But besides, there have been very few petitions asking for change in the navigation laws, whilst a very large number has been before the house in favor of the principles of the existing navigation laws; and, at all events, I can say of Glasgow, that a more respectably signed petition never emanated from that city, for it was signed by a large majority of the leading and most influential houses there. I am aware a few petitions have been received from the colonies; and with regard to those from the West Indies, I would observe that they were got up in their despair, being the effects of previous legislation. I am also aware however, that some of these petitions have now either been rescinded or entirely withdrawn. There have been petitions from the Provinces of British North America in favor of the present navigation laws, and there have been some two or three from Canada asking a repeal of these laws. (Here his Lordship observed that, there was an address or petition from the Legislature, when I said I was quite aware of that and would come to it presently.) But in those petitions they not only asked for a repeal of the navigation laws, but they asked for what was of far greater importance to every interest in that colony, and that was a protective duty in this country of 5s. per quarter for their corn. (to which his Lordship nodded assent.) This, my Lord, I maintain is of infinitely greater consequence to them than any change in our navigation laws. And here, my Lord, I may take leave to say, and I think the gentlemen present will admit, that, in consequence of my commercial connection with Canada, and from my long residence there, I feel myself entitled to speak of that province; for I know, and your Lordship is no doubt aware, as every one must be who will look at the local position of that country, and to the course of the River Lawrence, that, even if the navigation laws were done away with to-morrow, the Canadians could not compete in the corn trade with the State of New York and other States of the Union.

I come now, my Lord, to the address or petition from the legislature of Canada, and of it I would just say, that from my knowledge of some of the members composing that body, I was quite prepared to expect a vote of that nature, as many of the leading members of it were the originators and instigators of the unfortunate disturbances that took place in that colony some years ago, at which time I was a resident in that country. I much fear, my Lord, that that party has now in view the same end they had at that time, as this, with other agitating subjects of Legislation now before them, if persisted in, must inevitably result in the loss to this nation of our North American Colonies.

Then, my Lord, with regard to Canada, when Mr Labouchere first introduced in this session the measure now under consideration, he, in my opinion very ostentatiously and very prominently quoted at considerable length from a copy of a letter received through the Governor of Canada, Lord Elgin, from a concern in Montreal, Messrs Holmes, Young, and Haap, as a reason and justification for the introduction of this bill.

Now, My Lord, I know the members of that firm, and I think it my duty to inform your Lordship, that one if not two of them are Americans—of the United States; the other, my Lord, is a Scotchman. I may not, my Lord, be able to give you the precise words of that communication, but I think I can do it in substance; however, it can at any time be referred to. The letter runs like this:

"We have an order for two hundred and 50 tons Scotch pig iron for Chicago, and doubt not but large quantities will be wanted in the American lakes, but we find our hands completely paralysed by the operation of these obnoxious navigation laws. Last fall we sent orders to Cuba for three cargoes of molasses and sugar, provided prices came within our limits, but no British ship could be found to load for Montreal."

Now, My Lord, with regard to the first part—this Scotch pig iron, I assert there is nothing in the existing navigation laws to prevent its being carried from Canada to Chicago, or any part of the States;—but I can tell your Lordship what hinders its introduction there—it is a duty of 30 per cent. imposed upon it by the United States of America. Then, with respect to the sugar and molasses part of that communication, I can speak of it from experience. The company in Glasgow with which I am connected, took that trade into consideration, and having rival establishments, not only in Canada, but in other parts of the British North American provinces, we thought that in connection with

the carrying of coals to Havana for the West India mail steam-packet company, we might be enabled to make a saving of freight, or a fair profit for some part of our tonnage in that trade. With this in view, we undertook, some few years ago, to carry a cargo of coals from the Clyde to Havana for the West India mail steamboat company, at a very moderate rate of freight, and we arranged with Mr Wardrop of Glasgow, who has a house in Cuba, that they should take charge of our ship, and that, after the discharge of the coals they should, if possible procure freight for her to the British North American Colonies. Being uncertain of a cargo of sugar, we in this case did as we generally do, when we send any of our ships seeking employment, instructed our correspondent in Cuba to purchase the necessary quantity of sugar on our own account, and to despatch the ship direct to Quebec, in the event of their being unable to obtain freight for the ship. Well, my Lord, the ship got out to Havana, but no cargo or freight could be procured; in accordance, then, with our instructions, sugar was purchased on our own account, with which the ship arrived safely at Quebec, and it was there landed under the care and management of our own house. The ship was afterwards laden with timber, which she brought to this country. But, my Lord, I must tell you what became of the sugar. After keeping it for some time, and in vain endeavouring to dispose of it in Canada, even to leave us the very smallest freight, we were unable to do so; and at last we brought it in other of our own ships from Quebec to this port, and sold it in the city of London. We have since attended to the course of the markets of Cuba, and have consulted our friend, Mr Wardrop, but have never been able to do anything in that trade. And I am sure the gentlemen here will say, that if such a trade could be carried on to advantage, the house with which I connected could do so.

Mr Labouchere, also, when he introduced this measure, gave this country, the assurance that the Americans were prepared to open to us their coasting trade, as soon as we opened our trade, as proposed by the bill, to them; but my Lord, it is now perfectly evident there was no authority for such a statement. [His Lordship said that Mr Baneroff had said so, when I observed we are so informed; but from what had since transpired, it was certain that the American Government had never given any authority on the subject.] And in addition to their refusal to allow us to enter on their coasting trade, we have very clear indication that that nation is about to increase their import duty on the manufactures of this country.

Now, my Lord, with respect to the navigation bill;—Immediately after its introduction to the House of Commons this session, the ship owners of Glasgow and Port Glasgow, and those interested in shipping there, went over its clauses most carefully and attentively, as they were prepared to agree to, and acquiesce in, any modification or improvement that could be shown to be necessary or required at this time, but we very soon saw that the alterations proposed by the bill were of that nature and extent that we could not, with any hope of success, attempt to make any amendments or suggestions upon it. We then waited, in expectation that when it came to be discussed in committee, and to be considered in all its bearings, it would be made entirely a new measure; but I must say we were more astonished when this bill came out as amended in committee, seeing that about one third of the whole measure was done away with which related chiefly to the coasting trade.

Now, with regard to this part of the trade, I must tell your Lordship that it is in this branch of it that we fear competition with foreigners the least; but by doing away with it and by retaining the bill as it now stands, you are about to confer a favor and an advantage upon the foreigner, while you propose thereby to do injustice to another interest in this country; for if the repeal of the navigation laws is to produce the object anticipated—that is the reduction of freight—it must follow that by opening up the trade with foreigners the foreign agriculturalist will be enabled to import his corn at a cheaper rate; while, by holding the coasting trade as it now stands, and free from competition with foreigners, the rate of freight from Ireland and the coasts of England and Scotland to London and other great markets will be maintained to the loss and disadvantage of our own agriculturalists. For this and other reasons that might be shown there is no principle but that of inconsistency in this bill, and we are unable to ascertain on what grounds even traders can vote for it.

But, my Lord, if this bill become the law of this country, it appears to us it will force British shipowners to become foreign shipowners, and, practically, it will be a very simple process to have our ships registered at Hamburg or other free towns in Europe, or under the circumstances, to make arrangements with America; and in this way we would be freed from all the disadvantages that are apparent in this bill, and we would then be enabled not only to possess the privileges of foreigners, but also all the advantages that are to be held out to the British shipowners. [His Lordship then remarked that then we would not have the protection of the British flag. True, I said; but, my Lord, under the American flag we would feel equally secure.]

Then, again, in accordance with what we now hear so much said about, the British shipowner must buy his ships in the cheapest market; and most assuredly the English market is not the cheapest, and therefore not only will British capital be sent to foreign countries, but our very best carpenters and workmen will be