

most able to bear the burden, the suffering being borne for the most part vicariously.

In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries when the bonds that held the serf to the manor were loosened and a comparative freedom of enterprise in England stimulated activity and made that country richer and stronger, it left the less competent members of society a wage-earning class, the Statue of Laborers, closely connected with the first appointment of Justices of the Peace, confining the laboring population to stated places of abode and requiring them to work at specified rates of wages. Wandering or vagrancy thus became a crime, though a large number of the offenders had done nothing "criminal," the anomaly being due to the fact that a man was not allowed even to go about in search of work. Legislation was everywhere passed in the interests of the employer, until, in the reign of Richard II., the recognition of the distinction between the impotent and the able-bodied poor became absolute. Two centuries later, a great impulse was given to human enterprise and human imagination by the results of geographical discovery, which completely transformed society; but it was more than ever "the iron age of the peasantry and wage-earning classes." The misery of people displaced by this gigantic enterprise—this sweeping change—was intense; but the world was becoming a larger, better, and on the whole more prosperous place. An Act passed in the reign of Henry VIII., provided that the impotent poor were to be licensed by the magistrates to beg within certain limits. Civil strife was less common, and barons had no longer need for their bands of retainers. Religion, adapting itself to the idea of social progress, strangely enough became more tolerant under a dissolute and profligate king. Men were slowly becoming less dependent; and everywhere it became apparent that freedom was a necessity towards progress just in proportion as the increase of activity demanded an exact reorganization of social relationships to the new impetus. At the commencement of the seventeenth century it became obvious that the laws which condemned criminals

and even vagrants to slavery, branding, and death, on the one hand, and mere voluntary charity on the other, would not meet the evil caused by social and economic changes of various kinds, and hence an elaborate system of poor law relief was founded by the famous act of 1601. In the middle of the eighteenth century all Europe was desolated by the scourge of innumerable tramps, and the whole system of poor law relief was elaborated and the law of vagrancy recast so as to punish only those persons who really preferred idleness to parish relief. The industrial revolution at the close of the century produced fresh displacement and entailed additional misery. The handicraftsmen were rendered *hors de combat* by the introduction of power machinery and the steam engine, yet an unprecedented increase of population was proof that the masses of the people had never before been so prosperous.

Thus it is seen that each succeeding epoch in taking care of itself requires greater expansion of thought and wider scope for action, increased mental activity to quicken the rate of industrial transformation in the interests of self-preservation. In this way the ties between master and slave became less hard, and little by little slavery fell in all Christian countries just in proportion to the progress made by the inferior class, and as the conditions of each country demanded. The abolition of slavery accomplished at great sacrifice and in the midst of enormous obstacles, is the crowning glory of the nineteenth century. Inequality between man and man is in the nature of things and can never be prevented where temperaments differ, but now each has the right, if not always the opportunity, to raise or lower himself according to his work, his skill, and his merit. Under the action of time, of prudence, and of sacrifice, master and servant, employer and employee, are slowly being placed on the same footing. Where formerly absolute power rested in the hands of a favored few, the democracy is now all-powerful. Emperors and kings no longer acquire their power "by divine right," which, in bygone times, formed an excuse for debauchery, extravagance, and persecution, but retain it subject to