

philanthropy still more to ameliorate and improve. The great social deficiency of the present day is, in my opinion, the want of healthful, innocent, and improving recreations for the poor. We should endeavour to increase their self-respect. If necessity compels them to be mere machines when at their daily toil, they should be restored to the recollection of their humanity and capabilities when it is over. There is, after all, less effort required to effect this than is supposed. Dickens touched and won the hearts of thousands, whose sensibilities had perhaps long been frozen over, by merely reading a book out to them. We look to the bodily wants of the poor, their food and clothing, the bare necessities of existence, in fact; and we forget what is of infinitely more importance—their thoughts, hopes, and feelings. We thus too often give them no chance. The pleasures of sin stand opposed by *nothing*. It is not with them, as with us, the deliberate rejection of virtuous for vicious pleasure. It is the pleasures of evil opposed by a positive blank—a dreary nothingness. And yet we take credit to ourselves for sympathising with our poor fellow-creatures, and express a virtuous horror and indignation at their error, crime, and insensibility. God grant that a better time may come, and that this deep reproach may be removed from us! Let those of a higher and better class manifest sympathy and interest with their poor brethren—sympathy of the kind Mr. Dickens manifested when he read his Christmas tale out to them—and we should soon find how much there was that was admirable and excellent—how much that might be diverted from evil and turned to good in the heart and mind of the poor man or woman. Circumstances and opportunity only are required for developing character. Who would have supposed the despised private soldier to be what he has shown himself to be—full of the noblest traits that can dignify humanity—till the fiery trial brought his character out in bright and full relief. My voice is feeble to urge on this matter, but I raise it earnestly and hopefully. The cause advocated would ennoble any appeal.