

The effects of the Division of Labour

WHEN Adam and Eve were driven forth from Eden and were ordered to work out their own livelihood, they found that an All-Wise Creator had provided them with all the abilities necessary for doing so. But, when their numerous progeny had grown up, it became evident that they were not endowed, all alike and in the same proportion, with the abilities necessary for wresting a livelihood from the soil. Instead, great divergencies of temperament and of abilities were found even in the one family.—this man was physically fit, this man, an intellectual giant, though physically weak; this man had an aptitude for tilling the soil, this man, for waging war; here was one who could skilfully manage a boat, here, one who could cleverly contrive the dwelling.

Hence arose the division of labour. The intellectual man planned the great works, the strong man executed them. The husbandman tilled the fields which his warrior brother protected. The sailor conducted men and merchandise to and fro over the waves while the architect built the homes of the people. These examples, while they are extreme, yet contain, as in solution, the idea of the division of labour. Briefly, this division consists in the application of one man, or set of men, to one occupation, or trade, or profession.

Before going directly to the consideration of its effects, let me say a word relative to the operation of the division of labour. The division of employments is more general and more sharply defined in large centres, where the demand for one kind of produce is great and steady enough to make it profitable for one set of men to devote themselves to its production alone. In a sparsely settled district, a man who could make watches and could do nothing else, would be unable to earn a living owing to the insufficient demand for his work. So Adam Smith says very well, that "division of labour is limited by the extent of the market." The way in which the different employments supplement each other can best be shown by considering the case of the farmer. He devotes himself to the growing of grains and vegetables with which he supplies the city. The city man, being provided with food, can devote himself to the building of farm