

What is the difference between the farmer and the mechanic in this respect? It is simply this. The former raises his own bread-stuffs and tubers, and the latter makes shoes, or chairs, or ploughs, or wagons; sells them for cash; then with the money so received purchases those very articles produced by the agriculturist. The process is, simply, an exchange of labor: the farmer works for the mechanic, and the latter works for the former, each depending on the other, in part at least, for what he wants. What is the difference between the farmer and the doctor? Very similar to that between the farmer and the mechanic. The one supplies the other with what he wants to eat, drink, and wear; and, in return, the last supplies the first with jalaps, and powders, and tincture, and liniments—and when there is occasion for it, pulling his teeth, cutting off diseased limbs, and restoring to its proper place a dislocated bone. And what is the difference between the farmer and the merchant? It is pretty much of the same sort as in the two cases named. The farmer supplies him with beef, pork, lamb, veal, and poultry for his table; and, with wool, cotton, and flax, for his apparel. In return, the merchant hands over to the farmer money with which he pays his taxes, and procures for his family such articles as he cannot raise upon his farm. And besides supplying his own wants, the merchant takes all the surplus produce of the farmer, and sells it out as wanted to others, either to those at home or shipping it to foreign countries, paying him in cash for it. Thus, as the merchant produces nothing himself, he is the mere pedlar of the farmer and the mechanic, and gets his living by selling the several commodities which they produce, at a higher price than he pays for them. The farmer and the mechanic had better pay the merchant for being the factor and pedlar of what they produce, than to spend their own time in doing it. He can do this better than they can; and they can earn more in their respective vocations than in doing this.

This exchange of labor between the farmer and the three classes of persons named, is one of the beautiful and beneficial features in civilized life and social economy. It is essentially the same between the farmer and every other class of persons. They are all living upon his labor, or are employed in completing the processes he has begun for sustaining the fabric of human society. Without him they could not subsist. If they were to fail of receiving his products, they all would cease to exist, or else they would be obliged to become farmers themselves. This is not mentioned to create odium against either class of persons in the community, but simply to show the relation between all classes, and the dependence severally of each upon any other one. It is strange, therefore, that it should ever have been imagined, that the occupation of the farmer is subordinate, or in any respect less reputable than that of any other persons. If a comparison were to be instituted, for which there is no occasion, the advantage would be the other way. It would be found that all others would be subordinate to him, and in some measure dependent upon him. So far as respectability is concerned, it may be proper to remark, that that depends not so much on the occupation as it does on the character and talents of the individual engaged in it. Any occupation, however respectable and elevated in itself, may be degraded and rendered comparatively disreputable, by a want of character and talents in the persons who have it in trust; and, on the other hand, an occupation that in itself is subordinate and seemingly without