

matched in strength. The weak ones, especially the babies, actually die sometimes for want of fresh air—at least the doctors and the newspapers tell us they do. Now savage babies may die of small-pox or of starvation, they may even die to make a feast for their black skinned relatives, but they do not die gasping for fresh air. The fact that a slaughter of the innocents must go on not for a few days in a little Syrian village as the result of the special edict of a tyrant fearful for his crown, but all over the civilized world under the unwritten, self-administering statutes of civilization, seems to me an inconvenience.

It will not do to give people the idea that there is no alternative to the present state of affairs save in barbarism; they may accept the alternative. But as a matter of fact it is not true; the history of reform and invention proves that institutions can be changed to suit the requirements of the people who live under them. Contrast the "worries of the poor," or the awful loneliness of the pioneer's cabin on the prairie with what might be. Here is what Ruskin, the old man, says about it after all his years of thought. He speaks first about improving the houses of the people as they stand, and then goes on: "And then the building of more, strongly, beautifully and in groups of limited extent, kept in proportion to their streams and walled round so that there may be no festering and wretched suburb anywhere, but clean and busy streets within and the open country without, with a belt of beautiful garden and orchard round the walls, so that from any part of the

city perfectly fresh air and grass and sight of far horizon might be reachable in a few minutes' walk." If I am asked how this ideal may be achieved I answer at this time that to stop boasting about our big cities and our big country will be a good first step, and to set the value of human life higher than so called progress will be a second.

It seems to me that we civilized people might be like a well-bred family living in a spacious and beautiful home, using our time for all true pleasures and making improvements in our surroundings deliberately and with enjoyment of our work. Instead of that it seems to me we are like a set of parvenues, each community filled with vanity, and taking happiness only in outshining the others. Everything we do is done to make a point in some unworthy competition of fashion.

The home of each community is continually in a state of confusion with "modern improvements," and we live, as it were, in a never-ending litter and in shadowy hope of ever postponed completeness. We must put up with ten thousand inconveniences because the improvements which we should make for our own benefit and make well and completely, we allow to be half made for us, content if only we can keep up with our rivals. What is wanted in this world is a community that prizes life, enjoyment and national improvement, rather than push, fashion and "Progress." Let us cease this turmoil which kills both body and soul, and let us realize the value of the time that is given us and the opportunities we have to be happy.

