

to be the best judge how many shillings a bale of raw material is worth to him. The merchant ought to be the best judge how many shillings his bale of raw material is worth to him. The buyer may take it for granted that the seller will not take any sum but one which is, just then, of more value to him than the goods. The seller may take it for granted that the buyer will not give any sum but one which is, just then, of less value to him than the goods. The argument, then, seems complete; "I may buy as cheap as I can, and sell as dear as I can; for every one with whom I deal is the best judge of his own interests." It is not always that a piece of reasoning leads one to a conclusion so comfortable. But it is not to be wondered at that many an honorable man should be perfectly satisfied with reasoning which seems so fair, when the conclusion is so inviting.

Admit two things,—that the parties are equally solvent, that the parties are equally shrewd; and then, as a mere piece of dry mechanism, your principle may stand tolerably upright. But two men do not meet as two machines; they are two brothers. Each one is bound to look not only "on his own things, but also on the things of another." You cannot divest yourself of this duty; God has ordained it, and, while God is love, the law is unalterable. In your neighbor you are bound to see a brother whose feelings, whose reputation, whose property, whose family, are all sacred as your own. "Let no man seek his own, but every man another's wealth," is a precept weightier than all the dicta of the exchange. It is highly convenient to evade this precept by assuring yourself that every man will look to his own interests, and that therefore you may just gripe all that others will let you gripe. But, in doing so, you let yourself down from the level of a Christian to the level of a scambler. Even amongst men who meet on equal terms, commerce on your principle, is not a system of mutual services, but a system of mutual supplanting. But among men, who meet upon unequal terms, that principle will bear you out in cruel oppression. A cloth-maker offers to a cloth-merchant a parcel of cloth. His manner, or something else, tells the merchant that he is under the necessity of finding money. He asked a fair price. According to the best judgement of the merchant, that price would afford the maker a fair remuneration, and would afford himself a fair profit. But he knows, or he guesses, that money happens to be, at that moment, of exorbitant value to his neighbor. On this conviction he refuses the fair price, and offers one that would double his own profit, but would leave the other without any profit, or with a loss. The other hesitates, reasons, entreats, but at last reluctantly yields. The merchant exults in a good bargain. A good bargain! is that what you call it? Why, the thing you have done is neither more nor less than taking advantage of your neighbor's necessity to deprive him of the just reward of his labor, and to put it in your pocket. "But I am not bound to look after another man's interests." Yes, you are. God has bound you to it. He has bound all other men to do the same to you. "But, if my money were not of more value than his goods, why did he accept it? I did not force him." Yes, you did, as far as in you lay. You saw you had him in a position where he must either submit to the loss you imposed upon him, or