

The directing faculty, indeed, includes the inventive; this last being a peculiar form of it.

The function of the directive faculty, as applied to the complex operations of modern productive labour, is perhaps best illustrated by the case of a printed book. In the production of ten thousand copies of a printed book, the labour of the paper-makers and the printers is the same in kind and quality, whether the book be valuable or valueless—whether the ten thousand copies be ten thousand articles of wealth, or merely so much rubbish. What makes them valuable, when they are so, is the qualities of the author's manuscript. This manuscript, considered under its industrial aspect, is a series of minute directions, every one of which modifies, firstly every single movement made by the hands of the compositors; and secondly the results of every impress of the type on paper; one mind thus imparting the quality of wealth to ten thousand products simultaneously.

When a man invents an apparatus, such (let us say) as the telephone, the manufacture of which involves the co-operation of a thousand labourers, the case is essentially the same. The new apparatus is an addition to the world's wealth, not because its parts are made with a technical skill, which we presuppose—for the utmost technical skill is very often employed in the making of contrivances which, in practice, are wholly futile—but because each of its parts is fashioned in accordance with a given design, with which the technical skill of the operative has nothing at all to do, and because these parts unite to form a mechanical organism, of whose functions and principles the operatives are frequently quite ignorant. The apparatus, in short, is successful, and adds to the world's wealth, because the designs of the inventor are like so many injunctions which thrill through the brain of each labourer engaged on its special parts; or are like a thousand mental hands emanating from the inventor's mind, which touch and guide, unseen, each labourer's arms and fingers. And with the direction of labour generally into this channel or that—its application from year