

the preservation of life itself. In China, where there are as yet very few railways, the people of a famine-stricken province die off by hundreds of thousands when grain is going to waste within a hundred miles of them. In India, where under the British occupation 25,000 miles of railway have been built, corn can easily be rushed into a famine district, and the widespread famines which used to desolate the country are almost a thing of the past.

Nor is the economic advance of man without influence on his higher life. Compare the primeval man or the savage of to-day with the citizen of a civilized community. The savage lives usually from hand to mouth, has no leisure for thought, is unable to turn to account the natural forces which he sees in operation around him. He is usually short-lived, liable to attacks of epidemic disease, ignorant and improvident, almost as much at the mercy of nature as are the lower animals. Take away his accustomed food, and he perishes; restore it, and he multiplies; transfer it to another region, and he must follow, as our Indian tribes used to wander after the herds of buffalo over the vast plains of the West. In such a society neither art, nor literature, nor religion, can ever flourish. These imply the existence of individuals who do not need to devote all their time to the mere securing of food; the life of the savage is so precarious that no one can be spared from that most necessary work of "keeping the wolf from the door." Hence no considerable degree of mental development has been or can be attained in a primitive community.

At a comparatively early period, however, the most enterprising nations found it possible to withdraw a number of their people from actual manual labour and dedicate them to the pursuit of what we often call "the higher things of life." The rest of the population became mere hewers of wood and drawers of water for these favoured individuals, and toiled throughout long centuries to provide their lords and masters with the wherewithal for a refined and luxurious existence. Slave labour was the