

wrong somewhere—some law of God must be broken. Mis-government or bad-government, cruel selfishness or faithless slothfulness must be in the ascendant. These are our brothers who are dying famished and torn, and shall they cry for help in vain?—

“The curse of gold upon the land,
The lack of bread enforces;
The rail-cars snort from strand to strand,
Like more of death's white horses!
The rich preach “rights” and future days,
And hear no angel scoffing—
The poor die mute—with starving gaze
On corn-ships in the offing.”

It may be reasonably doubted then whether, with all the wealth we have gathered and all the material prosperity of which we can boast, the land flowing with milk and honey be yet in sight. Great things have been achieved no doubt; but look at the social, political and moral evils that stand round, mountain-high, waiting to be righted! Penetrate below the surface a little, and how sad the lesson we read! We are proud of the “stately homes of England,” the abodes of refinement and luxury, “amid their tall ancestral trees”; but what of the condition of the hodmen, and brick-layers who reared the pile—what of the agricultural labourers whose toil produced this lordly wealth? They are living in wretched dwellings unfit for the lower animals, and the mass of them cannot read the Lord's Prayer, or write their own names. Look at this veil of Brussel's lace that adorns the fair head of beauty, on her bridal morn,—what can be more exquisite in texture and finish? Ah! but there is a dark background to the picture. The beautiful fabric is the work of “fingers weary and worn,” for the poor lace-weavers at Brussels are compelled to sit in cold and moist apartments, otherwise the thread so attenuated could not be drawn out; and the walls are so damp, and the atmosphere so vapour-laden that consumption rides in the air and mows down its victims in four or five years. That beautiful silk, and rich velvet have been woven by poor Spitalfields or Lyons silk-weavers, “amid poverty, hunger and dirt” such as Mayhew has described. That delicate embroidery, in which beauty sets off her charms, is the work of some half-starved peasant-girl who toils sixteen hours a day for the wretched pittance of six pence:—

“Bending backward from her toil,
Lest her tears the work should spoil;
Shaping from her bitter thought
Heart's ease and forget-me-not.”

These alas! are the types of our civilization. From the glittering mask of modern wealth the wan, tragic face of poverty looks out. At a terrible cost to the toiling masses, a few secure the prizes and find them questionable benefits after all.

I turn now to another view of the subject. We are accustomed, in these days, to boast of the immense progress we have made in the mechanical arts. But after all, when we look closely into the matter, it must be confessed that in many departments of art and knowledge, the