

MONEY AND THE WORKING-MAN.

THE working-man is the only substantial citizen. The nation is strong in proportion to the number of its working-men. Every institution which tends to diminish the amount of positive performance in a nation—which goes to lessen the grand result of human labour—is an evil institution! Such are, necessarily, all stock companies, which, from being agents of social industry, become primary conditions; and divert, from their legitimate tasks, the minds and energies of a population which it thence renders superfluous. There is in our country a very prevalent distaste for labour. We loathe and despise the severer tasks of that industry which removes mountains and fills the desert with fruits and blossoms. Our people prefer to be lawyers, doctors, divines, and tradesmen; and hence the enormous disproportion between the number that we have, and the number that we require, of those agents of the producer, who contribute nothing to the national stock. Society is very much like a beehive. If the drones are allowed to remain, even if they do not propagate, the hive will very quickly become empty. Perhaps, the most fearful sign to the patriot in our times, is the singular dependance which we exhibit upon foreign labour. There is a morbid vanity at work among us, which seems indeed, to be the only thing that does work to its utmost—which makes us revolt at those necessary tasks of the fields and highways, without duly grappling with which, society must continue to lose, day by day, more and more, of its whole some characteristics. In our day, the cry is—"want of money." The proper subject of complaint is a want of industry. We have money enough in proportion to our need, in proportion to our industry; but not enough in proportion to our profligacy and vain pretence! Perhaps, it is owing to our having so much money, or so much that had the look of money, and was believed to be money, that we are now suffering and complaining. Money is one of the most dangerous of all social possessions!—There are very few people who know properly how to make use of it. Most persons not accustomed to its use, become gamblers with it; and the Americans, being a new and consequently a poor people, were, of all others, least prepared to use it judiciously. In many respects the Spaniards were the richest people in the world. They are now among the most degraded. The one condition came from the other. By the discovery and conquest of South

America, they had suddenly come into possession of a power, gigantic almost beyond all others, which they knew not how to manage. Take the youthful heir of an old miser—one, whom the sordid stinginess of the sire has, while he lived, kept in the most contracted limits of a slavish economy. Let him be free among the hoards of which he has only dreamed before, and mark with what studious industry he dissipates them. It is, indeed, a subject of boast with him, that he does so—as expensive living, in our days, has become a subject of boast with us. "May be I did'n't *kum it* while it lasted!" was the chuckling reply of a profligate, born to fortune, when one of his friends condoled with him upon its loss.—This miserable creature fancied, while he spoke, that he was an object of admiration to all bystanders. A people may become profligate, even as an individual, for excesses are periodically epidemic. The American people have been profligate even in this fashion. For the last ten years we have presented the spectacle of an entire nation, "*kumming it*," in like manner with the silly heir, and with like consequences. It is something, however, which encourages us hopefully for the future, that our "*kumming*" is no longer a subject, with us, of congratulatory chuckle. We shall cease to "*kum it*," I suspect, for some ten years to come—but the periodical return of the epidemic is tolerably certain, unless we learn to respect money less and labour more. Meanwhile, our moralists will be eloquent from the house-tops. We shall have prate enough against speculation, until the rabid fit comes on; and then, "*hey, presto, for the world in a string again!*" Seriously, our levity of character is a great evil in our moral constitution. It cannot be otherwise, until labour becomes more a native than it is. We must shut up our shops—six in every seven at least—the seventh is adequate to all the traffic necessary—and go back to the deserted fields, and make our own potatoes and learn to dig them for ourselves. How many good farmers have the last ten years converted into bankrupt tradesmen and bad men!



I CANNOT call riches better than the baggage of virtue; the Roman word is better, *impedimenta*; for as the baggage is to an array, so is riches to virtue; it cannot be spared nor left behind, but it hindereth the march: yea, and the care of it sometimes loseth or disturbeth the victory; of great riches there is no real use, except it be in the distribution; the rest is but conceit.—*Bacon.*