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SATURDAY, JUNE 23, 1894.

ALL THE WORLD OVER.

*"I must have liberty,
Withal as large a charter as the wind—
To blow on whom I please."*

JUST now, it is frequently remarked that the principal cause of distress among laboring men may be traced to the fact that in times of plenty they failed to practice economy. This, so far as the individual is concerned, may be a correct solution of the problem, but, it may be asked, is thrift the lever of all economical progress and of wealth, or is it the essence of all poverty and misery? Is it a virtue or a vice? Viewed from the standpoint of an individual it is undoubtedly a virtue; from that of a nation it is a curse, because consumption would decrease and wages would be lowered to the minimum rate of pay given to the cheapest labor in the world. These questions have become very important ones in our economical development. The ancients did not trouble themselves much about thrifty habits. The Greeks regarded the whole business of money making as very low, and extremely unworthy of a free man. Plato's aristocratic mind looked down upon thrift as some kind of a sin. These ideas prevailed until the beginning of the Middle Ages, when the merchant and the tradesman became powerful, and were the most intelligent people of their time. The governments of all countries encouraged thrifty habits, the same as sober habits. Luxury was considered a vice, and ordinances were passed against luxury, and were commended in an academical speech by Melancthon in

1536. These rules and ordinances passed by nearly all the governments of Europe, existed until the latter part of the eighteenth century. People who grew up under them naturally absorbed the opinions endeavored to be taught by these ordinances, and thrift was commended as one of the leading virtues of life.

It is, therefore, not to be wondered at that Adam Smith, the father of modern economical science, says in his "Wealth of Nations": "Capital is the result of thrift; it can only be obtained if we do not spend immediately all the results of our labor, but put aside a part for future use." This is endorsed by Schulze-Delitzsch in his "Workman's Catechism," and Von Mangold in his "Hand-Book of National Economy" declares that he who tells the workman that "he can never be in comfortable circumstances without thrift, simply lies." This, from the standpoint of an individual, is undoubtedly correct. The laboring man must necessarily be thrifty in order to acquire contentment, and it is perfectly right in our economical life to be judiciously thrifty, which will enable us to overcome the difficulties of a seven years of famine by a reserve fund gathered through a seven years of plenty.

A nation, however, does not prosper by thrift, but by an increase of consumption, necessitating an increase of production. If all workmen saved consumption would naturally decrease, and when consumption decreases there is no demand for labor, and when the demand for labor ceases wages naturally fall lower. It is not easy, therefore, to find the golden mean between these conflicting ideas. We must acknowledge that thrift has very little to do, indeed, with the building up of modern fortunes. It would sound rather ironical if we were to speak of our millionaires having saved their millions. An income should be large enough to satisfy all our moderate wants, and if we endeavor to save by robbing our bodies of needful comforts we actually waste the most precious of all things in the world—human energy and ability. Savings due to a reduction in wages must always hurt a nation, and will always diminish its strength, but no matter what the enemies of thrift tell us, so far as it relates to a nation, it is a good thing for the individual and should be practiced. We can not, of course, in

our days hope to become a capitalist by saving, but there will always be an ebb and flood in our economical life, and during the flood we should prepare for the ebb.

It is announced in the daily papers that Japan has quarantined Hong Kong on account of the existence of the Black Plague at that port. It is further stated that at Canton, where the plague started, the deaths now average 200 a day. This plague bears a marked resemblance to the epidemic which first visited England in 1348-9 and also in 1665. In Europe, during its first and most dreadful visitation, it was noticed that it carried off an enormous number of the laborers in the country villages, the poor and the workmen in the towns, the monks and nuns and friars, that is, all that portion of the population that were ill-housed, ill-clothed, ill-nurtured, or, like those in the religious houses, lived habitually upon an insufficient diet, among whom the practice of asceticism in various forms tended to a weakening of their stamina and their vital power. On the other hand, the mortality among the clergy was far in excess of that among any other class, and this can be attributed only to their noble self-sacrifice in the discharge of their ministerial duties among their parishioners. Breathing day and night the pestilential air, working heroically among the people in every stage of the disease, comforting the dying, and burying the dead in the huge pits that were dug to contain the putrid corpses, the priests dropped by thousands into the same graves in which they had helped to lay their people; and, before the year was out, the supply of clergy began to fall short very seriously all over the land. At Florence, Boccaccio tells us, "it became necessary to dig trenches, into which the bodies were put by hundreds, laid in rows, as goods packed in a ship; a little earth was cast upon each successive layer until the pit were filled to the top." At Avignon, several almost as soon as they were seized with the sickness "were carried off to the pit and buried alive." At Vienna, "the dead were buried in trenches, each of which, according to one chronicler, contained some 6,000 corpses." In London, Sir Walter Manny provided a new cemetery, more than thirteen acres in extent, "in respect of the danger that might befall

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