

in a bargain, or of my poverty to wrench from me usurious interest ; that man who sells adulterated goods to me, or gives me stinted measure in my wood, or coal, or milk, or groceries : the man who sells me 'stuff' to steal away my brains ; that man who 'shaves' my note, or unjustly alters his 'account' against me or against my estate when I am gone ; that man who refuses to pay me when he can, or makes me take an 'order' when I bargained for the 'cash' ; that man who fails in trade, and pays me but ten per cent. of what I worked so hard to earn for him, and lives in princely style for the remainder of his life : that man who 'boards' with me and never means to pay for it : who borrows money of me which he knows he never can return ; who pretends to more than he is worth and thus induces me to indorse his paper, or to less than he is worth, and thus avoids the payment of his taxes ; the man who deceives me by his false advertisement, informing me that he is selling 'cheap' when he is selling dear ; that man who imposes on me damaged goods for sound ones—'wooden shoes' for leather ones—or cheats me any way, whether by fair pretensions or by 'low-browed knavery' ; whether in broadcloth or in homespun ; whether I have sense to find it out or not ; that man breaks the law, 'Thou shalt not steal,' as certainly as the thief who robs a bank beneath the cover of darkness—that man is really as amenable to God's eternal justice as the ruffian that plunders 'while the watchmen sleep.'

He takes deceitfully what does not belong to him, and that is breaking—whether done by himself or his agents, by wink or by nod, above the counter or beneath it, by pen-craft or by tongue-craft, by false label or false way-bill, by counterfeit coffee, in State Street, or Natick—in mercantile, agricultural, mechanical or professional life—that is breaking the eighth commandment of Almighty God !

There is, my friends, a sad mistake among us on this point. We are deceived by names, misled by outward show, disposed continually to forget that law, that dreadful law, which underlies the human law and binds us close and tight where this can never reach.

The doctor forgets it when he prolongs disease that he may lengthen out his bill against his victim ; the lawyer forgets it when he advises men to go to law in cases which might be adjusted peacefully at home ; the minister forgets it when he preaches anything 'but Christ, and him crucified' ; the layman, also, forgets it when he refuses to pay his proportion to support the gospel ; the school-teacher forgets it when he neglects that poor and bashful scholar in the corner ; the farmer forgets this statute of eternal rectitude when he removes an ancient landmark, or permits his cattle to destroy his neighbor's garden ; the mechanic forgets it when he does his work unfaithfully ; the milkman, when he sells his 'watered milk' ; the painter, when he adulterates his paints ; the traveller, when he neglects to advertise the purse he finds, or rides upon the railroad farther than he pays for ; the publisher forgets it when he overstates the circulation of his paper ; the quack