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## **THREE UTOPIAN SOCIALISTS**

### **(Claude-Henri Saint-Simon, Charles Fourier and Robert Owen)**

#### **I. Claude-Henri Saint-Simon (1803), Letters from an Inhabitant of Geneva to His Contemporaries \*Excerpt**

Let each subscriber nominate three mathematicians, three physicists, three chemists, three physiologists, three authors, three painters and three musicians...Divide the amount of the subscriptions between the three mathematicians, the three physicists, etc., who have obtained the most votes. [subscriptions included fees that would pay rulers, so that they would serve the people rather than private interests.] Men of genius will in this Way enjoy a reward which is worthy of themselves and of you; this reward is the only one which will supply them with the means to give you all the service of which they are capable; it will become the object of the ambition of the most active minds and will deflect them from anything which might disturb your peace of mind. Finally, by doing this you will be providing leaders for those who are working for the progress of your enlightenment; you will be endowing these leaders with great prestige and you will be placing considerable financial resources at their disposal.

...Until you have adopted the measure which I propose to you, you will be exposed, each in your own country, to the sort of evils which some of your class have suffered in France. In order to convince yourselves of the truth of what I have said, you have only to think about the events that have occurred in that country since 1789...At this moment in Europe, the actions of governments are not troubled by any open opposition from the governed; but given the climate of opinion in England, Germany and Italy, it is easy to predict that this calm will not last long, unless the necessary precautions are taken in time; for, gentlemen, you cannot conceal from yourselves that the crisis which faces the human mind is common to all the enlightened peoples, and that the symptoms which appeared in France, during the terrible explosion which occurred there, can be detected at the present moment by an intelligent observer in England, and even in Germany.

Gentlemen, by adopting the project which I am proposing, you will limit the crises which these peoples are fated to suffer, and which no power on earth can prevent, to simple changes in their governments and finances, and you will spare them the general upheaval undergone by the French people-an upheaval in which all existing relations between the members of a nation become precarious; and anarchy, the greatest of all scourges, rages unchecked until it plunges the entire nation it afflicts into a depth of misery. It is in your own interest to adopt the measure which I propose, in the light of the evils from which it can save you...

Let us now return to my plan. By adopting and putting it into practice, you will permanently entrust to mankind's twenty-one most enlightened men, the two great instruments of power: prestige and wealth. The result will be that, for many reasons, the sciences will make rapid strides. It is well known that the study of the sciences becomes easier with every advance made, so that those who, like yourselves, can only devote a

short time to their education can learn more, and as they learn more, they lessen the extent of the power exercised over them by the rich. It will not be long, my friends, before you see the resultant benefits.

...Subscribe my friends! No matter how little money you subscribe, there are so many of you that the total sum will be considerable; besides, the prestige bestowed on those whom you nominate will give them untold strength. You will see how the rich will hasten to distinguish themselves in the sciences and the arts, once they realize that this road leads to the highest honors. Even if you only succeed in diverting them from the quarrels born of their idleness, over how many of you should be under their command, quarrels in which you are always embroiled and of which you are always the dupes, you will have gained much.

## II. Charles Fourier (1772-1837), The Phalanstery \*Excerpt

The announcement does, I acknowledge, sound very improbable, of a method for combining three hundred families unequal in fortune, and rewarding each person – man, woman, child – according to the three properties, capital, labor, talent. More than one reader will credit himself with humor when he remarks: “Let the author try to associate but three families, to reconcile three households in the same dwelling to social union, to arrangements of purchases and expenses, to perfect harmony in passions, character, and authority; when he shall have succeeded in reconciling three mistresses of associated households, we shall believe that he can succeed with thirty and with three hundred.” I have already replied to an argument which it is well to reproduce (for repetition will frequently be necessary here); I have observed *that as economy can spring only from large combinations, God had to create a social theory applicable to large masses and not to three or four families.*

...It is necessary for a company of 1,500 to 1,600 persons to have a stretch of land comprising a good square league, say a surface of six million square toises (do not let us forget that a third of that would suffice for the simple mode). The land should be provided with a fine stream of water; it should be intersected by hills, and adapted to varied cultivation; it should be contiguous to a forest, and not far removed from a large city, but sufficiently so to escape intruders.

A company will be collected consisting of from 1,500 to 1,600 persons of graduated degrees of fortune, age, character, of theoretical and practical knowledge; care will be taken to secure the greatest amount of variety possible, for the greater the number of variations either in the passions or the faculties of the members, the easier will it be to make them harmonize in a short space of time.

In this district devoted to experiment, there ought to be combined every species of practicable cultivation, including that in conservatories and hot-houses; in addition, there ought to be at least three accessory factories, to be used in winter and on rainy days; furthermore, various practical branches of science and the arts, independent of the schools.

A great difficulty to be overcome in the experimental Phalanx will be the formation of the ties of high mechanism or collective bonds of the Series, before the close of the first season. It will be necessary to accomplish the passionate union of the mass of the members; to lead them to collective and individual devotion to the maintenance of the Phalanx, and, especially, to perfect harmony regarding the division of the profits, according to the three factors, *Capital, Labor, Talent*.

Let us proceed with the details of composition.

At least seven-eighths of the members ought to be cultivators and manufacturers; the remainder will consist of capitalists, scholars, and artists.

The Phalanx would be badly graded and difficult to balance, if among its capitalists there were several having 100,000 francs, several 50,000 francs, without intermediate fortunes. In such a case it would be necessary to seek to procure intermediate fortunes of 60,000, 70,000, 80,000, 90,000 francs. The Phalanx best graduated in every respect raises social harmony and profits to the highest degree.

Is not the rich man obliged to discuss his affairs with twenty peasants who occupy his farms, and who are all agreed in taking illegal advantage of him? He is, therefore, *the peasant's associate*, obliged to make inquiries about the good and the bad farmers, their character, morals, solvency, and industry; *he does associate in a very direct and a very tiresome way* with Grosjean and Margot. In Harmony, he will be their indirect associate, being relieved of accounts regarding the management, which will be regulated by the regents, proctors, and special officers, without its being necessary for the capitalist to intervene or to run any risk of fraud. He will, therefore, be freed from the disagreeable features of his present association with the peasantry; he will form a new one, where he will not furnish them anything, and where they will only be his obliging and devoted friends, in accordance with the details given regarding the management of the Series and of reunions. If he takes the lead at festivals, it is because he has agreed to accept the rank of captain. If he gives them a feast, it is because he takes pleasure in acknowledging their continual kind attentions.

The edifice occupied by a Phalanx does not in any way resemble our constructions, whether of the city or country; and none of our buildings could be used to establish a large Harmony of 1,600 persons – not even a seat palace like Versailles, nor a great monastery like the Escurial. If, for the purposes of experiment, only an inconsiderable Harmony of 200 or 300 members, or a *hongrée* of 400 members is organized, a monastery or a palace (Meudon) could be used for it.

The lodgings, plantations, and stables of a Society conducted on the plan of Series of groups, must differ vastly from our villages and country towns, which are intended for families having no social connection, and which act in a perverse manner; in place of that class of little houses which rival each other in filth and ungainliness in our little towns, a Phalanx constructs an edifice for itself which is as regular as the ground permits: here is a sketch of distribution for a location favorable to development.

The central part of the Palace or Phalanstery ought to be appropriated to peaceful uses, and contain the dining-halls, halls for finance, libraries, study, etc. In this central portion are located the place of worship, the *tour d'ordre*, the telegraph, the post-office boxes, the chimes for ceremonials, the observatory, the winter court adorned with resinous plants, and situated in the rear of the parade-court.

One of the wings ought to combine all the noisy workshops, such as the carpenter-shop, the forge, all hammer-work; it ought to contain also all the industrial gatherings of children, who are generally very noisy in industry and even in music. This combination will obviate a great annoyance of our civilized cities, where we find some man working with a hammer in every street, some dealer in iron or tyro on the clarionet, who shatter the tympanum of fifty families in the vicinity. The other wing ought to contain the caravansary with its ballrooms and its halls appropriated to intercourse with outsiders, so that these may not encumber the central portion of the palace and embarrass the domestic relations of the Phalanx.

### **III. Robert Owen, A New Vision of Society (1816). \*Excerpts**

Dedication: To the superintendents of manufactories...

Like you, I am a manufacturer for pecuniary profit, but having for many years acted on principles the reverse in many respects of those in which you have been instructed, and having found my procedure beneficial to others and to myself, even in a pecuniary point of view, I am anxious to explain such valuable principles, that you and those under your influence may equally partake of their advantages.

Many of you have long experienced in your manufacturing operations the advantages of substantial, well-contrived, and well-executed machinery. Experience has also shown you the difference of the results between mechanism which is neat, clean, well-arranged, and always in a high state of repair; and that which is allowed to be dirty, in disorder, without the means of preventing unnecessary friction, and which therefore becomes, and works, much out of repair. In the first case the whole economy and management are good; every operation proceeds with ease, order, and success. In the last, the reverse must follow, and a scene be presented of counteraction, confusion, and dissatisfaction among all the agents and instruments interested or occupied in the general process, which cannot fail to create great loss.

If, then, due care as to the state of your inanimate machines can produce such beneficial results, what may not be expected if you devote equal attention to your vital machines, which are far more wonderfully constructed?

When you shall acquire a right knowledge of these, of their curious mechanism, of their self-adjusting powers; when the proper mainspring shall be applied to their varied movements you will become conscious of their real value, and you will readily be induced to turn your thoughts more frequently from your inanimate to your living machines; you

will discover that the latter may be easily trained and directed to procure a large increase of pecuniary gain, while you may also derive from them high and substantial gratification.

Will you devote years of intense application to understand the connection of the various parts of these lifeless machines, to improve their effective powers, and to calculate with mathematical precision all their minute and combined movements? -- And when in these transactions you estimate time by minutes, and the money expended for the chance of increased gain by fractions, will you not afford some of your attention to consider whether a portion of your time and capital would not be more advantageously applied to improve your living machines? From experience which cannot deceive me, I venture to assure you, that your time and money so applied, if directed by a true knowledge of the subject, would return you, not five, ten, or fifteen per cent for your capital so expended, but often fifty, and in many cases a hundred per cent.

I have expended much time and capital upon improvements of the living machinery; and it will soon appear that time and the money so expended in the manufactory at New Lanark, even while such improvements are in progress only, and but half their beneficial effects attained, are now producing a return exceeding fifty per cent, and will shortly create profits equal to cent per cent on the original capital expended in them.

Indeed, after experience of the beneficial effects from due care and attention to the mechanical implements, it became easy to a reflecting mind to conclude at once, that at least equal advantages would arise from the application of similar care and attention to the living instruments. And when it was perceived that inanimate mechanism was greatly improved by being made firm and substantial; that it was the essence of economy to keep it neat, clean, regularly supplied with the best substance to prevent unnecessary friction, and by proper provision for the purpose to preserve it in good repair, it was natural to conclude that the more delicate, complex, living mechanism would be equally improved by being trained to strength and activity and that it would also prove true economy to keep it neat and clean; to treat it with kindness, that its mental movements might not experience too much irritating friction; to endeavor by every means to make it more perfect; to supply it regularly with a sufficient quantity of wholesome food and other necessaries of life, that the body might be preserved in good working condition, and prevented from being out of repair, or falling prematurely to decay.

These anticipations are proved by experience to be just.

Since the general introduction of inanimate mechanism into British manufactories, man, with few exceptions, has been treated as a secondary and inferior machine; and far more attention has been given to perfect the raw materials of wood and metals than those of body and mind. Give but due reflection to the subject, and you will find that man, even as an instrument for the creation of wealth, may be still greatly improved.

But, my friends, a far more interesting and gratifying consideration remains. Adopt the means which ere long shall be rendered obvious to every understanding, and you may not only partially improve those living instruments, but learn how to impart to them such

excellence as shall make them infinitely surpass those of the present and all former times.

Here, then, is an object which truly deserves your attention; and, instead of devoting all your faculties to invent improved inanimate mechanism, let your thoughts be, at least in part, directed to discover how to combine the more excellent materials of body and mind which, by a well-devised experiment, will be found capable of progressive improvement.

Thus seeing with the clearness of noonday light, thus convinced with the certainty of conviction itself, let us not perpetuate the really unnecessary evils which our present practices inflict on this large proportion of our fellow subjects. Should your pecuniary interests somewhat suffer by adopting the line of conduct now urged, many of you are so wealthy that the expense of founding and continuing at your respective establishments the institutions necessary to improve your animate machines would not be felt, but when you may have ocular demonstration, that, instead of any pecuniary loss, a well-directed attention to form the character and increase the comforts of those who are so entirely at your mercy, will essentially add to your gains, prosperity, and happiness, no reasons, except those founded on ignorance of your self-interest, can in future prevent you from bestowing your chief care on the living machines which you employ. And by so doing you will prevent an accumulation of human misery, of which it is now difficult to form an adequate conception.

-THE AUTHOR

Essay (Chapter) One:

According to the last returns under the Population Act, the poor and working classes of Great Britain and Ireland have been found to exceed fifteen millions of persons, or nearly three-fourths of the population of the British Islands. The characters of these persons are now permitted to be very generally formed without proper guidance or direction, and, in many cases, under circumstances which directly impel them to a course of extreme vice and misery; thus rendering them the worst and most dangerous subjects in the empire. In this state the world has continued to the present time; its evils have been and are continually increasing; they cry aloud for efficient corrective measures, which if we longer delay, general disorder must ensue...

If these circumstances did not exist to an extent almost incredible, it would be unnecessary now to contend for a principle regarding Man...That principle is the happiness of self, clearly understood and uniformly practiced; which can only be attained by conduct that must promote the happiness of the community. [Man must] discover, that his individual happiness can be increased and extended only in proportion as he actively endeavors to increase and extend the happiness of all around him. For it is now obvious that a system [based on competition] must be destructive of the happiness of the excluded, by their seeing others enjoy what they are not permitted to possess; and also that it tends, by creating opposition from the justly injured feelings of the excluded, in

proportion to the extent of the exclusion, to diminish the happiness even of the privileged: the former therefore can have no rational motive for its continuance...

It will therefore be the essence of wisdom in the privileged class to co-operate sincerely and cordially with those who desire not to touch one iota of the supposed advantages which they now possess; and whose first and last wish is to increase the particular happiness of those classes, as well as the general happiness of society. A very little reflection on the part of the privileged will ensure this line of conduct; whence, without domestic revolution without war or bloodshed nay, without prematurely disturbing any thing which exists, the world will be prepared to receive principles which are alone calculated to build up a system of happiness, and to destroy those irritable feelings which have so long afflicted society solely because society has hitherto been ignorant of the true means by which the most useful and valuable character may be formed.

This ignorance being removed, experience will soon teach us how to form character, individually and generally, so as to give the greatest sum of happiness to the individual and to mankind.

These principles...direct that the governing powers of all countries should establish rational plans for the education and general formation of the characters of their subjects. These plans must be devised to train children from their earliest infancy in good habits of every description which will of course prevent them from acquiring those of falsehood and deception). They must afterwards be rationally educated, and their labor be usefully directed. Such habits and education will impress them with an active and ardent desire to promote the happiness of every individual, and that without the shadow of exceptions for sect, or party, or country, or climate. They will also ensure, with the fewest possible exceptions, health, strength, and vigor of body; for the happiness of man can be erected only on the foundations of health of body and Peace of mind.

Such has been our education, that we hesitate not to devote years and expend millions in the detection and punishment of crimes, and in the attainment of objects whose ultimate results are, in comparison with this, insignificance itself: and yet we have not moved one step in the true path to prevent crimes, and to diminish the innumerable evils with which mankind are now afflicted.

Essay (Chapter) Two:

...How much longer shall we continue to allow generation after generation to be taught crime from their infancy, and, when so taught, hunt them like beasts of the forest, until they are entangled beyond escape in the toils and nets of the law? when, if the circumstances of those poor unpitied sufferers had been reversed with those who are even surrounded with the pomp and dignity of justice, these latter would have been at the bar of the culprit, and the former would have been in the judgment seat. Can we for a moment hesitate to decide, that if some of those men whom the laws dispensed by the present Judges have doomed to suffer capital punishments, had been born, trained, and circumstanced, as these Judges were born, trained, and circumstanced, that some of

those who had so suffered would have been the identical individuals who would have passed the same awful sentences on the present highly esteemed dignitaries of the law.

'Let feelings of humanity or strict justice induce you to devote a few hours to visit some of the public prisons of the metropolis, and patiently inquire, with kind commiserating solicitude, of their various inhabitants, the events of their lives and the lives of their various connections. Then will tales unfold that must arrest attention, that will disclose sufferings, misery, and injustice, which you could not suppose it possible to exist in any civilized state, far less that they should be permitted for centuries to increase around the very fountain of British jurisprudence.'...

Let it not be longer said that evil or injurious actions cannot be prevented, or that the most rational habits in the rising generation cannot be universally formed. In those characters which now exhibit crime, the fault is obviously not in the individual, but the defects proceed from the system in which the individual was trained. Withdraw those circumstances which tend to create crime in the human character, and crime will not be created. Replace them with such as are calculated to form habits of order, regularity, temperance, industry; and these qualities will be formed. Adopt measures of fair equity and justice, and you will readily acquire the full and complete confidence of the lower orders.

[The suggested] plan is a national, well-digested, unexclusive system for the formation of character and general amelioration of the lower orders. On the experience of a life devoted to the subject, I hesitate not to say, that the members of any community may by degrees be trained to live without idleness, without poverty, without crime, and without punishment; for each of these is the effect of error in the various systems prevalent throughout the world. They are all necessary consequences of ignorance.

Train any population rationally, and they will be rational. Furnish honest and useful employments to those so trained, and such employments they will greatly prefer to dishonest or injurious occupations. It is beyond all calculation the interest of every government to provide that training and that employment; and to provide both is easily practicable.

The first, as before stated, is to be obtained by a national system for the formation of character; the second, by governments preparing a reserve of employment for the surplus working classes, when the general demand for labor throughout the country is not equal to the full occupation of the whole: that employment to be on useful national objects from which the public may derive advantage equal to the expense which those works may require.

The national plan for the formation of character should include all the modern improvements of education, without regard to the system of any one individual; and should not exclude the child of any one subject in the empire. Anything short of this would be an act of intolerance and injustice to the excluded, and of injury to society, so glaring and manifest, that I shall be deceived in the character of my countrymen if any of those

who have influence in church and state should now be found willing to attempt it. Is it not indeed strikingly evident even to common observers, that any further effort to enforce religious exclusion would involve the certain and speedy destruction of the present church establishment, and would even endanger our civil institutions?

Important as are considerations of revenue, they must appear secondary when put in competition with the lives, liberty, and comfort of our fellow subjects, which are now hourly sacrificed for want of an effective legislative measure to prevent crime. And is an act of such vital importance to the well-being of all to be longer delayed? Shall yet another year pass in which crime shall be forced on the infant, who in ten, twenty, or thirty years hence shall suffer DEATH for being taught that crime? Surely it is impossible. Should it be so delayed, the individuals of the present parliament, the legislators of this day, ought in strict and impartial justice to be amenable to the laws for not adopting the means in their power to prevent the crime; rather than the poor, untrained, and unprotected culprit, whose previous years, if he had language to describe them, would exhibit a life of unceasing wretchedness, arising solely from the errors of society.

Essay (Chapter) Three:

Those who have derived a knowledge of human nature from observation know that man in every situation requires relaxation from his constant and regular occupations, whatever they be: and that if he shall not be provided with or permitted to enjoy innocent and uninjurious amusements, he must and will partake of those which he can obtain, to give him temporary relief from his exertions, although the means of gaining that relief should be most pernicious. For man, irrationally instructed, is ever influenced far more by immediate feelings than by remote considerations.

Those, then, who desire to give mankind the character which it would be for the happiness of all that they should possess, will not fail to make careful provision for their amusement and recreation.

The Sabbath was originally so intended. It was instituted to be a day of universal enjoyment and happiness to the human race. It is frequently made, however, from the opposite extremes of error, either a day of superstitious gloom and tyranny over the mind, or of the most destructive intemperance and licentiousness. The one of these has been the cause of the other; the latter the certain and natural consequence of the former. Relieve the human mind from useless and superstitious restraints; train it on those principles which facts, ascertained from the first knowledge of time to this day, demonstrate to be the only principles which are true; and intemperance and licentiousness will not exist; for such conduct in itself is neither the immediate nor the future interest of man; and he is ever governed by one or other of these considerations, according to the habits which have been given to him from infancy.

The Sabbath, in many parts of Scotland, is not a day of innocent and cheerful recreation to the labouring man; nor can those who are confined all the week to sedentary

occupations, freely partake, without censure, of the air and exercise to which nature invites them, and which their health demands.

The errors of the times of superstition and bigotry still hold some sway, and compel those who wish to preserve a regard to their respectability in society, to an overstrained demeanor; and this demeanor sometimes degenerates into hypocrisy, and is often the cause of great inconsistency. It disgusts many, and drives them to the opposite extreme. It is sometimes the cause of insanity.

To counteract, in some degree, the inconvenience which arose from the misapplication of the Sabbath, it became necessary to introduce on the other days of the week some innocent amusement and recreation for those whose labors were unceasing, and in winter almost uniform. In summer, the inhabitants of the village of New Lanark have their gardens and potato grounds to cultivate; they have walks laid out to give them health and the habit of being gratified with the ever-changing scenes of nature - for those scenes afford not only the most economical, but also the most innocent pleasures which man can enjoy; and all men may be easily trained to enjoy them. It is highly favorable to the health, spirits, and dispositions of the individuals so engaged; and if any irregularity should arise, the cause will be solely owing to the parties who attempt to direct the proceedings being deficient in a practical knowledge of human nature.

It has been and ever will be found far more easy to lead mankind to virtue, or to rational conduct, by providing them with well-regulated innocent amusements and recreations, than by forcing them to submit to useless restraints, which tend only to create disgust, and often to connect such feelings even with that which is excellent in itself, merely because it has been judiciously associated.

...The Church and its doctrines...involve considerations of the highest interest and importance; inasmuch as a knowledge of truth on the subject of religion would permanently establish the happiness of man; for it is the inconsistencies alone, proceeding from the want of this knowledge, which have created, and still create, a great proportion of the miseries which exist in the world.

The only certain criterion of truth is, that it is ever consistent with itself; it remains one and the same under every view and comparison of it which can be made; while error will not stand the test of this investigation and comparison, because it ever leads to absurd conclusions. Those whose minds are equal to the subject will, ere this, have discovered, that the principles in which mankind have been hitherto instructed, and by which they have been governed, will not bear the test of this criterion. Investigate and compare them; they betray absurdity, folly, and weakness; hence the infinity of jarring opinions, dissensions, and miseries, which have hitherto prevailed...The criterion, however, which has been stated, shows, that they are all, without an exception, in part inconsistent with the works of nature; that is, with the facts which exist around us. Those systems therefore must have contained some fundamental errors; and it is utterly impossible for man to become rational, or enjoy the happiness he is capable of attaining, until those errors are exposed and annihilated.

Is proof demanded? Ask, in succession, those who are esteemed the most intelligent and enlightened of every sect and party, what is their opinion of every other sect and party throughout the world. Is it not evident that, without one exception, the answer will be, that they all contain errors so clearly in opposition to reason and equity, that he can only feel pity and deep commiseration for the individuals whose minds have been thus perverted and rendered irrational? And this reply they will all make, unconscious that they themselves are of the number whom they commiserate...

The doctrines which have been and now are taught throughout the world, must necessarily create and perpetuate, and they do create and perpetuate, a total want of mental charity among men. They also generate superstitions, bigotry, hypocrisy, hatred, revenge, wars, and all their evil consequences. For it has been and is a fundamental principle in every system hitherto taught, with exceptions more nominal than real, 'That man will possess merit, and receive eternal reward, by believing the doctrines of that peculiar system; that he will be eternally punished if he disbelieves them; that all those innumerable individuals also, who, through time, have been taught to believe other than the tenets of this system, must be doomed to eternal misery.'

It is from these fundamental errors, in all systems which have been hitherto taught to the mass of mankind, that the misery of the human race has to so great an extent proceeded; for, in consequence of them, man has been always instructed from infancy to believe impossibilities he is still taught to pursue the same insane course, and the result still is misery. Let this source of wretchedness, this most lamentable of all errors, this scourge of the human race, be publicly exposed; and let those just principles be introduced, which prove themselves true by their uniform consistency and the evidence of our senses; hence insincerity, hatred, revenge, and even a wish to injure a fellow creature, will ere long be unknown; and mental charity, heartfelt benevolence, and acts of kindness to one another, will be the distinguished characters of human nature.

Essay (Chapter) Four:

That government is the best, which in practice produces the greatest happiness to the greatest number; including those who govern, and those who obey. If there be one duty therefore more imperative than another, on the government of every country, it is, that it should adopt, without delay, the proper means to form those sentiments and habits in the people, which shall give the most permanent and substantial advantages to the individuals and to the community.

Ignorance generates, fosters, and multiplies sentiments and actions which must produce private and public misery; and that when evils are experienced, instead of withdrawing the cause which created them, it invents and applies punishments, which, to a superficial observer, may appear to lessen the evils which afflict society, while, in reality, they greatly increase them. Intelligence, on the contrary, traces to its source the cause of every evil which exists; [and] adopts the proper measures to remove the cause.

The measure of national improvement should be to repeal or modify those laws which leave the lower orders in ignorance, train them to become intemperate, and produce idleness, gambling, poverty, disease, and murder. The production and consumption of ardent spirits are now legally encouraged; licenses to keepers of gin-shops and unnecessary pot-houses are by thousands annually distributed; the laws of the state now direct those licenses to be distributed; and yet, perhaps, not one of the authors or guardians of these laws has once reflected how much each of those houses daily contributes to public crime, disease, and weakness, or how much they add to the stock of private misery.

The fundamental principle on which all these Essays proceed is, that 'children collectively may be taught any sentiments and habits' or, in other words, 'trained to acquire any character'...No one, it may be supposed, can now be so defective in knowledge as to imagine it is a different human nature, which by its own powers forms itself into a child of ignorance, of poverty, and of habits leading to crime and to punishment; or into a votary of fashion, claiming distinction from its folly and inconsistency; or, to fancy, that it is some undefined, blind, unconscious process of human nature itself, distinct from instruction, that forms the sentiments and habits of the man of commerce, of agriculture, the law, the church, the army, the navy, or of the private and illegal depredator on society.. or that it is a different human nature which constitutes the societies of the Jews, of Friends, and of all the various religious denominations which have existed or which now exist. No! Human nature, save the minute differences which are ever found in all the compounds of the creation, is one and the same in all; it is without exception universally plastic, and by judicious training the infants of any one class in the world may be readily formed into men of any other class, even to believe and declare that conduct to be right and virtuous, and to die in its defense, which their parents had been taught to believe and say was wrong and vicious, and to oppose which, those parents would also have willingly sacrificed their lives.

...The kind and degree of misery or happiness experienced by the members of any community depend on the characters which have been formed in the individuals which constitute the community. It becomes, then, the highest interest, and consequently the first and most important duty, of every state, to form the individual characters of which the state is composed...It follows that every state, to be well governed, ought to direct its chief attention to the formation of character; and thus the best governed state will be that which shall possess the best national system of education...The essence, however, of national training and education is to impress on the young, ideas and habits which shall contribute to the future happiness of the individuals and of the state; and this can be accomplished only by instructing them to become rational beings...Yet to this day the British Government is without any national system of training and education!!

The last national improvement which remains to be proposed in the present state of the public mind, is, that another legislative act should be passed, for the purpose of obtaining regular and accurate information relative to the value of and demand for labor over the United Kingdoms...We have stated, because it is easy of proof, that the revenues of all countries are derived directly or indirectly, from the labor of man; and yet the British

Government, which, with all its errors, is among the best devised and most enlightened that has hitherto been established, makes extravagant and unnecessary waste of that labor...This waste of human labor, as it is highly unjust to all, is not only impolitic in a national view, but is most cruel to the individuals who, in consequence of this waste, are the immediate sufferers...In ignorance and idleness, even in this country, where manual labor is or always might be made valuable, hundreds of thousands of men, women, and children are daily supported. No one acquainted with human nature will suppose that men, women, and children, can be long maintained in ignorance and idleness, without becoming habituated to crime. (It would, perhaps, prove an interesting calculation, and useful to government, to estimate how much its finances would be improved, by giving proper employment to a million of its subjects, rather than by supporting that million in ignorance, idleness, and crime.

The labor of every man, woman, and child, possessing sufficient bodily strength, may be advantageously employed for the public; and there is not, perhaps, a stronger evidence of the extreme ignorance and fallacy of the systems which have hitherto governed the world, than that the rich, the active, and the powerful, should, by tacit consent, support the ignorant in idleness and crime, without making the attempt to train them into industrious, intelligent, and valuable members of the community; although the means by which the change could be easily effected have been always at their command!

It is not, however, intended to propose that the British Government should now give direct employment to all its working population. On the contrary, it is confidently expected that a national system for the training and education of the poor and lower orders will be so effectual, that ere long they will all find employment sufficient to Support themselves, except in cases of great sudden depression in the demand for, and consequent depreciation in the value of, labor.

To prevent the crime and misery which ever follow these unfavorable fluctuations in the demand for and value of labor, it ought to be a primary duty of every government that sincerely interests itself in the well-being of its subjects, to provide perpetual employment of real national utility, in which all who apply may be immediately occupied. In order that those only who could not obtain employment from private individuals should be induced to avail themselves of these national works, the rate of the public labor might be in general fixed at some proportion less than the average rate of private labor in the district in which such public labor should be performed. The most obvious, and, in the first place, the best source, perhaps, of employment, would be the making and repairing of roads. It will be found true national economy to keep the public roads at all times in a much higher state of repair than, perhaps, any of them are at present. If requisite, canals, harbors, docks, shipbuilding, and materials for the navy, may be afterwards resorted to; it is not, however, supposed that many of the latter resources would be necessary.