

upon their savings, which consist too often of the fat about their bones—a kind of capital much spent before the glut is over.

Capital, ever ready for transfer, enormously augments these errors. It creates them. But for our vast heaps of disengaged capital, we should not have known the over-trading of 1825, the glut of 1842, the railway crisis of 1847. But for our over-abundant capital, we should not have proposed to make miles upon miles of railways not needed—should not have formed armies of surveyors, engineers, and “ navigators,” to be suddenly cast loose upon society without work or hope; should not have eaten up the savings of the orphan and the widow—who are ruined, while the real big capitalist merely slinks into retrenchment or gaily passes to “ other markets;” should not have had companies of shareholders now trying to raise millions sterling to make good Hudsonian bargains. If Trade is disposed to make a mistake, Capital can throw its whole moveable weight into the error, and give to it a fatal momentum.

Capital is greedy: the capitalist must be paid for being rich. Just as the landowner will not allow you to use land without paying him, who works it not, so the capitalist will not allow you to use “ stock ” without you pay him. Separately, too; for if the capitalist and the projector are united in the same person, the capitalist is careful that you should pay him in that capacity, distinctly, for “ interest of capital.” Capital will not allow any share of itself to be retained by Industry. The capitalist, owning an immense treasury, can live upon a very small return—upon the return of a moderate amount; a still smaller return upon huge amounts secures to him luxury: if a small capitalist, say, with a thousand pounds, can live in any business on a return of 5 per cent., the great capitalist can drive that small one out of the market by underselling him, accepting only 4 per cent.; which would be too little for the small capitalist to exist upon, but returns huge revenues to the owner of many small capitals. The large capitalist monopolizes the employment market, and decrees the rate of wages—laid so low that, if the workman can scrape any together as savings towards the beginning of capital, he must possess singular will and energy. Capital, therefore, can buy up the trade-market and the labour-market—and it does. Owned by luxury, Capital directs industry mainly for the benefit of luxury. England works for Belgravia—a state of things not only invidious, but precarious and dangerous.

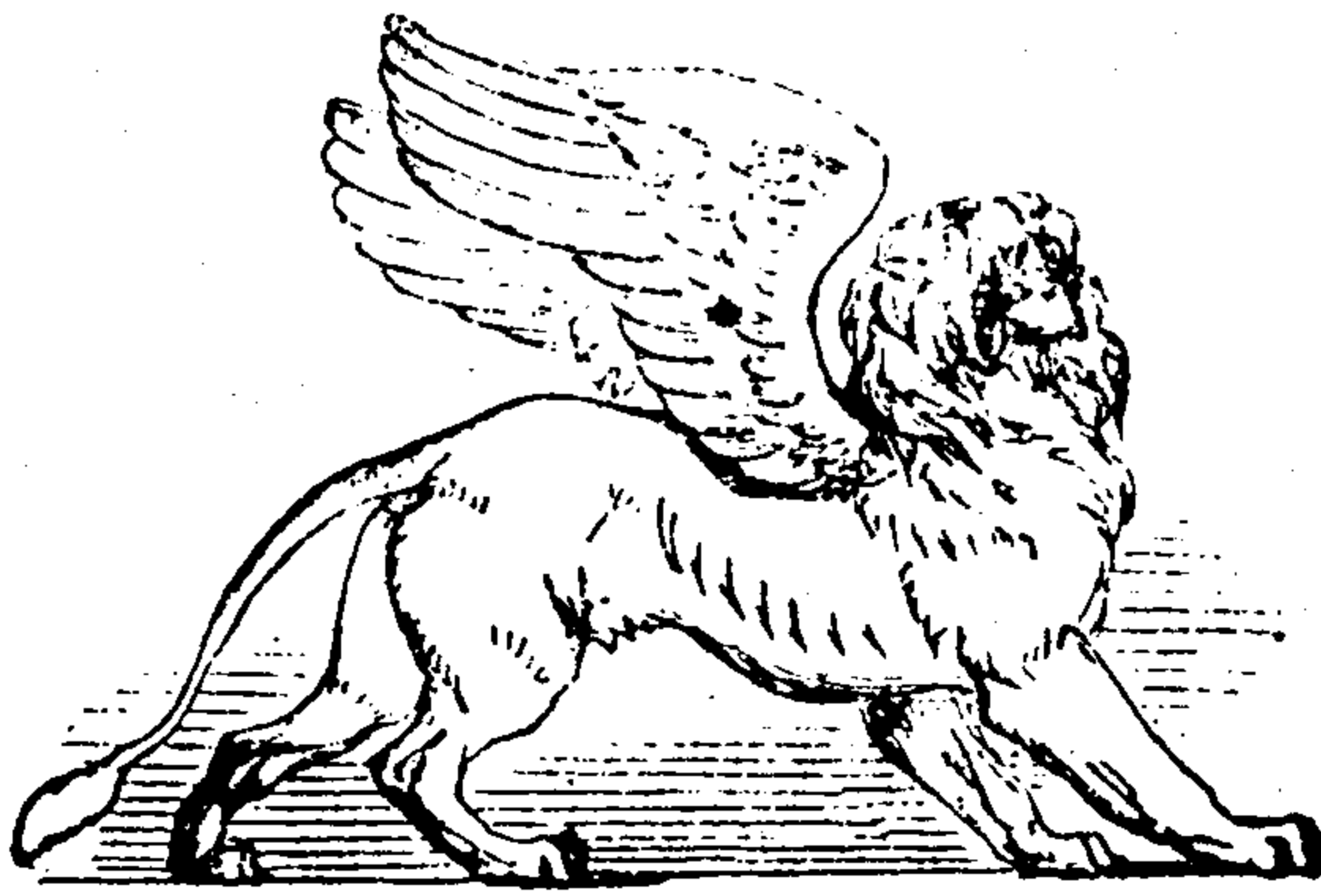
Capital decrees that there shall be waste. It sets industry—struggling in the scramble of the blind labour market for subsistence—much more about secondary occupations than primary; it chokes the warehouses with nicknacks and stuffs while whole classes are naked and starving: you cannot find a loaf or a shirt in this hovel, in that palace you cannot count the carpets, the rugs, the cushions, the toilet implements, the varieties of foods and condiments, the jewellery, the perfumes, the wardrobes, the endless appliances of wealth. Industry is bound down to the task of encreasing that very capital which tyrannizes over it and misleads it, which exists even to waste.

Do not say, my dear Erasmus, that I am ignorantly blind to the necessity and use of capital; I know that industry must have “ stock,” in order that it may be free for the best choice of occupations; but I, in my lifetime, am not bound by any natural duty to make “ stock ” enough for the next thousand years; especially if that stock shall belong to somebody else, and that owner shall set against my industry all the industry present and future available to the fattening of his idol, vouchsafing to me the lowest wages ascertainable in that hideous auction. I know that we cannot do without capital; but I say that in the idolatry of it we overlook its operation in augmenting all the mistakes of our present social organization or rather disorganization. Stock is most excellent for use; but we have made the toolhouse a tyrant, and the treasury an idol, in our questionless obedience to Capital.

Ever your affectionate,

THORNTON HUNT.

**SINECURE BENEFICES.**—A return to Government has been printed, containing a list of sinecure benefices in England and Wales, with the name of the patron and incumbent, and the annual value and population of each. It appears that there are 57 sinecure benefices, of which 18 are in the diocese of Norwich. The annual value of these benefices ranges from £10 to £1125. In some of the places there are no churches, and in others the churches are in a dilapidated state. The population exceeds in some of the sinecure benefices 1000 souls.



## Open Council.

[IN THIS DEPARTMENT, AS ALL OPINIONS, HOWEVER EXTREME, ARE ALLOWED AN EXPRESSION, THE EDITOR NECESSARILY HOLDS HIMSELF RESPONSIBLE FOR NONE.]

There is no learned man but will confess he hath much profited by reading controversies, his senses awakened, and his judgment sharpened. If, then, it be profitable for him to read, why should it not, at least, be tolerable for his adversary to write.—MILTON.

### CONDITION OF THE POOR.

Sept. 24, 1850.

SIR,—I join with some of your other correspondents in congratulating you on the excellent working of your Open Council. To hear with respect the voice of others on matters of deep common interest is the way towards universal enlightenment.

I do, indeed, object to a very few of the letters that have appeared. If any one were to write to you in defence of magic or astrology, or some other occult doctrine, I hope you would exclude his letter on the same ground as you would exclude a mathematical disquisition. Not wishing to seem to dictate, I merely ask you to consider whether you have not here erred twice through too great liberality.

On the other hand, you are right in admitting letters on religion (which other newspapers treat as too technical), so long as they deal with the subject as a popular one, cognizable by the popular understanding and heart.

But I did not mean to fill your columns with such critiques: I write to comment on the controversy which divides you and Dr. Smiles, and see whether it does not point to some practical result. You appear to me to be both right: Dr. Smiles, in alleging that the state of the poor has improved, and you, in declaring that it has deteriorated. How so? First, because the poor is a vague phrase, embracing two different classes—the employed and the unemployed poor. Secondly, because they are partly better and partly worse; and to strike the balance is often difficult.

Dr. Smiles\* alleges that wages (at least in the towns) are higher than they were, and go farther than ever. You reply, that many people are out of work; and a hand-loom weaver farther replies, that his remuneration is very bad. Of course it is: There is no contradiction here. We must embrace both sides to gain a complete view of England.

Dr. Smiles, moreover, declares that the political power of the poor is far greater than it was. Your reply seems to be, that they are more than ever driven off the soil. Again I say both are right. I proceed to draw conclusions, and make general comments.

1. Every school of anti-political economists—whether Socialists or Protectionists, Aristocrats or Republican democrats—is unjust towards master-manufacturers and master-tradesmen. This calumniated class of persons pays every year larger sums for wages than at any previous time in England, and is complained of because there are still people out of work, or because the wages still are not so high as workmen wish. May they rise! Amen: but blame not the masters if they are low, as certainly no one thanks, or will thank them if they are high.

2. Until a company of coequal workmen has shown in actual trial that it can permanently carry on a great manufactory, which needs machinery and other fixed capital, knowledge, enterprise, and energy, no one has any right to speak of it as more than a possibility for Socialism to undertake such works. If the workmen at present do not like the work or the wages, let them find a better, or, at any rate, not blame the master. It is absurd to quarrel with your crutch till you are well of lameness, or can, somehow, walk without it.

3. A large part of the sufferings of the English people is a payment for their personal liberty. For instance, they have free right to move from the country into the town; hence, they have been open to the temptation of migrating into the towns to get higher wages: and since far more are seduced by the hope than can actually find employment, the towns are flooded by needy vagrants, too numerous, too independent, and too unorganized to be overseen by the authorities. They become demoralized, and propa-

\* I am obliged to quote from memory.

gate misery. In Germany the police would not allow to the poor this freedom—would treat them more like children, and thus save them from many miseries.

What else is the right to drink ale, cider, and gin without restriction, than part of an Englishman's birthright? As the song of the Lancashire morrice-dancers says—

“ I shall always maintain 'tis an Englishman's right  
To dance, to drink, to work, and to fight.”

4. The laws or institutions of society may make men miserable; but cannot make them happy any more than virtuous. All populous nations hitherto have had considerable masses of vicious and indigent persons whom nothing human can help. That England has not been able to hinder this painful result is to be lamented. Let us try to find out its causes and dry them up at the source; but let us not think England worse than other old and fully peopled countries.

5. If Spain or Greece be disordered and poor while England flourishes, that is no disgrace to England. So, if one part or one class of England is vicious and distressed while others are prosperous, that is not necessarily a disgrace to the prosperous—perhaps the very contrary. If the law gives no artificial bonus to the prosperous, their prosperity is *prima facie* evidence of superior talent or virtue. And if the law gives them no control over the vicious and miserable party, it is unjust to treat them as responsible for the misery. All this applies to the justification of master-manufacturers and great tradesmen.

A state of things is to be desired, when all the world shall be so knit together that the overflowing wealth, knowledge, wisdom, and goodness of one part shall relieve the wants of another less happy part; but no one blames a more civilized nation barely because we are very far off from this state. What I have here said concerning different nations, is true of the different classes of the same nation in proportion as they aim at independence. If the poorer will insist on being their own masters, and spurn a state of serfdom or tutelage, they must leave off whining about their neglect by the richer classes, and must look to themselves for everything. Let them cry for help to Wisdom, but not to Wealth.

I fear I am tedious, and I must be more concise. Abruptly let me say—I have no doubt that you have attacked the right point in your recent articles concerning LAND. The disease of England is fundamentally this, that her rural industry is unexpansive; hence the whole increase of population flows over into the towns. The result is, that the towns must always contain masses of indigence, clustered in unwholesome dwellings, with benefit to nothing but to the rent of land.

In part, the law of England is to blame; namely, in so far as entails and the difficulties about title, want of registration, and expence of deeds impede the free sale of land. This is an Augean stable which not even a river of revolution could cleanse: for the law would revive and survive any process of mere violence. Nothing can here aid us but a revolution of opinion among the educated, and especially among lawyers: and gradually it will come, with or without University Reform.

But in part, also, the yeomanry itself has been to blame. I have for years past tried to preach to the few landed proprietors of my acquaintance the advantages of peasant freeholders; but I have always been met by the objection, that this state of things, somehow, everywhere dies out of itself. One friend showed me the fact by the county registers of Devonshire; another testified it to me from his own knowledge of Cumberland. I asked why this was, and received the following explanations.

Sometimes the freeholder is tempted by the offer of an extravagant price for his land by a rich peer or banker; he cannot resist, but sells his little freehold for a large sum down. He employs it in trade, and either swells the number of thriving townsmen or loses it, and makes beggars of his children.

Sometimes (and in Cumberland, I believe, often) the little freeholder, with other old-fashioned habits, retains that of excessive drinking, and cannot compete in the market with sober men. Thus competition (naughty, unchristian practice!) ruins him, and he sells his land in despair.

Sometimes he envies the more rapid and splendid gains of trade, and does not calculate on its reverses, and sells his land to speculate. Or, again, he leases it to a neighbouring farmer, and keeps a shop or becomes a bricklayer or other artisan. This, I am told, is a common case, and that it is the desire of some more enterprising employment, with a chance of larger, though less secure, gains, which makes small freeholders give up.

To this must be added the taste for foreign luxuries and disdain of coarse abundance. Peasant proprietors have thriven, only in proportion as they seek to be independent of market prices, and to find sufficiency in native products, principally raised by themselves. If our notions of civilization become purged of the monstrous error which puts it in the external polish of dress and house and appurtenances; if we look to abundance of wholesome food and dress for the body, with wholesome culture to the

mind, there may be a better chance for peasant proprietors. But if foreign luxuries and superfine cloth are thought necessities, and rye bread and loose shapeless garments are disdained, the trial is a harder one.

The object, however, in my view, ought not to be artificially to encourage peasant freeholders, or any special tenure of land; but, to secure that the land shall maintain those who are born on it, and that they shall not flow over into the towns; nay, if possible, to bring about a steady flowing back of the tide from the towns into the country. We want a trumpet tongue to proclaim that, unless the growth of the towns be checked by developing rural industry, there is no hope, no possibility, of hindering the towns from containing heaps of misery which it is shocking to contemplate.

I have much more to say, but fear I have said too much for the present.

I am, Sir, yours respectfully,  
FRANCIS WILLIAM NEWMAN.

#### ROBERT OWEN'S FIRST PRINCIPLE.

September 24, 1850.

SIR,—In the *Leader* of last week three gentlemen have each written a letter on this subject. Two of these correspondents were called into the field of controversy in consequence of some remarks of mine in a previous number of your paper, and I conclude you will permit me to say a word or so in reply to their strictures. Mr. Charles Kingsley and Mr. E. V. Neale are the two who have honoured me with a direct opposition, and it is with their epistles only I shall deal at present. I will be as brief as I can. To maintain in the columns of the *Leader* a long debate upon the interminable questions of the free will and free agency of man is not very desirable, except insofar as they relate to the practical working out of the vast social problem of the age. Mr. Kingsley will, I am sure, agree with me in this. He is, however, one of those who believe and teach that man is a free agent and in possession of a free will, and he accordingly ridicules my late humble attempt to show the impropriety and absurdity of that doctrine, as illogical and as "a most complicated form of confusion." Now, I confess, after an attentive perusal of my offending article, I have not been able to discover in what part of the argument the "confusion" exists; and I strongly suspect it lurks quite in another quarter. Nor can I discover that my reasoning has in the least outraged legitimate logic. I argued hypothetically—if such and such premises be admitted, then such and such conclusions will necessarily follow—and there is no breach of logic in that. My object was to point out by means of this hypothetical process the weakness of the assertion, that "all men are free agents," and I here repeat the argument, and am prepared to stand by its validity, that if it be granted that certain circumstances over which man has no control have at any time the power of compelling the course of conduct any individual shall take, and if, in no single instance, we can positively affirm that a man's conduct was *not* determined, compelled by circumstances beyond his control, such as education, physical organization, and social position, then, I say, it is inconsistent, it is a piece of unjustifiable dogmatism, to broadly proclaim the universal free agency of man. With all proper respect for Mr. Kingsley's logical acumen, I must deny that there is any similarity between this ratiocination and that which would prove "all horses are green because one may be so." But Mr. K. is somewhat pleasant with me for asserting a mere "truism," as he calls it; the fact is, however, that I am guilty in his eyes, not of having given out a "truism" as a philosophical discovery, but of having applied a "truism" in a manner adverse to his own theories. Utterly unable to refute the reasoning, he tries to render it ridiculous; how far he has succeeded in this others will judge as well as myself. Few, I fancy, who read his letter will obtain from it much enlightenment as to the definiteness of the author's views on the questions he writes about. He admits "that men are formed and compelled by circumstances, warped and stunted by them," though he does not tell us what those compulsory circumstances are. But, then, he thinks man ought not to be formed and compelled by them. Why so, I would ask? If men can be made vicious by bad circumstances—and that they can "is a fact which needs no further proof than a walk through St. Giles's"—why may they not be made virtuous by good circumstances? Why is Mr. Kingsley advocating so warmly, and with so much noble enthusiasm, the cause of co-operative labour? and why does he indignantly denounce as "degrading" the prevailing system of competition? Is he not using means to substitute "brotherly help" for "wolfish competition?" and is not "brotherly help" to promote brotherly kindness? and is not brotherly kindness the holiest of all social virtues? and are not the means which he is employing to realize these glorious ideal circumstances antecedents to consequences? Mr. Kingsley himself is one, and not perhaps the least influential, of the circumstances by which the world is to be improved; so that, according to his own logic, he is "a practical

falsehood" — "the utter bane of Socialism!" I wonder if he ever considered himself as a Circumstance.

Again, he admits that "education, social reforms, and all other outward appliances" can prevent a man's character being "warped, stunted, degraded;" and yet he denies that man ought to be formed by external circumstances. How can this apparent contradiction be reconciled? The object of education, he says, is to put men into favourable circumstances, in order to *educate* something already in them. Granted; education is designed to draw out and properly direct all the human faculties; and, when that design is fulfilled, man will be "delivered from evil—inward evil," as Mr. K. terms it—"from inward selfishness, pride, laziness, meanness, and ferocity;" and I hold that the "outward circumstances" of education—education in its widest acceptation—can do this. But Mr. Kingsley believes in the inherent corruption of human nature, and never hopes to eradicate our "primæval lusts." I should feel much obliged if Mr. K. would inform me of what these "lusts" consists, and how they found their way into our nature. For my own part, I reject the doctrine of the necessary wickedness of man, and with it the legend of Eve and the Serpent.

There are two more points in Mr. Kingsley's letter I must notice before I dismiss it; one is what he remarks of Luther, Bacon, Elizabeth Fry, and other great reforming spirits by whose exertions the world has been driven onwards in religious freedom, philosophy, and philanthropy. These individuals have become great, saith Mr. K., by keeping up a constant battle with their passions. Quite the reverse is the truth. These Reformers became great by an assiduous development of their predominant powers or passions. Luther had a passion for opposing the Pope, Bacon had a passion for philosophy, and Mrs. Fry for improving our criminal law; and by cultivating these powers, as far as circumstances would permit, have enrolled themselves among the heroes of humanity. The other point on which I wish to remark is where Mr. K. says, if my theory of non-free-agency were true I should be now "grubbing up pignuts in a state of primæval breechlessness, for those were the circumstances of our forefathers." This is a fallacy; and any school history of England will prove it so. Such might have been some of the circumstances of our forefathers, but assuredly were not the *only* ones. Had certain invasions never happened, with a few other trivial events, perhaps things might have remained as they were 1850 years ago. But, my dear Mr. Kingsley, fear not, society will progress, and Socialism will be triumphant at last, although you ignore "Robert Owen's first principle," a principle you have not succeeded in overthrowing.

Sir, I am afraid your limits will not suffer me to devote many words to Mr. Neale, whose alarm at being told he has no free will is prodigious. Let me ask if Mr. N. has ever read the work of Jonathan Edwards on the Will, or the opinions and arguments of the late Dr. Chalmers on that subject. I am inclined to think he has not done so, or he would hardly have written the letter to which I am now referring.

In spite of the metaphysical differences between Socialists of the present day, I hope they will all work together hand in hand to advance the common cause, and not allow errors of the head to sever the sympathies of the heart.

I am, yours obediently, F. G.

#### THE SAME.

London, Sept. 23, 1850.

SIR,—It is evident that Mr. Kingsley imagines Mr. Owen's first principle to be something which it is not; for his arguments are directed against a very different idea.

That some men are "the puppets of the circumstances around them," like the "masses" whom Mr. Kingsley refers to, and that others are not the puppets of the circumstances around them, like the distinguished individuals whom he names, is very true; but this has reference only to some of the circumstances which have been concerned in the formation of their character and conduct. This is not what is meant by those who understandingly assert that "man is the creature of circumstances." All the circumstances of parentage and education—that is to say, all the circumstances which have had any part in producing and developing them, are included in the assertion. Take away these, and what have we?—Nothing. If, for instance, St. Bennett's father, or his grandfather, or any of his forefathers, had not been caused to marry the individual whom he did marry, St. Bennett would never have been born. And, allowing all these circumstances to have been as they were, many changes in the circumstances of his parents or ancestors may be supposed which would have materially altered the infant organization of which St. Bennett, the man, was made. But, let all the circumstances which preceded and produced the birth of St. Bennett be exactly as they were, and let the infant be born with the organization with which he was born—what would he have become if he had never

seen a book—never been taught to read or write—been placed from his birth among savages, for instance? Consider this, and the effects which might have been produced by a thousand other modifications in the circumstances in which he was placed from his birth, and then say if the statement that "man is to a very great extent the creature of circumstances" is too strong. But do not imagine that it is asserted that after the child has been born he is entirely the creature of subsequent circumstances—"the mere recipient of external impressions," as Mr. Kingsley says. Here, again, Mr. Kingsley mistakes the principle, and objects to something which is no part of it. It is not denied, as he imagines, that the effect of education is "to educate something which is already in the individual." But it is affirmed that this something, or these somethings, may be educated in such an endless variety of ways by the influence of varied circumstances, that the effect of those circumstances may truly be called "overwhelming." Circumstances would not make a Napoleon of the infant of whom Bacon was made, nor a Bacon of the infant of whom Napoleon was made, nor a Shakespeare of the infant of whom Mozart was made, &c.; but circumstances might have made an endless diversity in the adults "manufactured" out of those "raw materials," might have made far better and wiser, or far less good or less wise men of them. Does not society, do not external circumstances, continually take, say, two children, with nearly equal powers and tendencies, and make one a man of much scientific knowledge, the other totally ignorant of science; one a man of sense, the other a fool; one a man of honour and honesty, the other a hypocrite, a liar, a thief; one a man of intelligence and moral courage, the other an ignorant superstitious coward? In short, do not circumstances produce an endless variety of characters from organizations having nearly equal natural capacities, the worst result being often produced from the superior natural organization? The facts which demonstrate all this are continually occurring around us and before our eyes.

Considering all this, does not common sense suggest that we should endeavour to ascertain what are the circumstances or the external deficiencies which produce or allow the growth of the inferior results, and what circumstances will produce the superior results in all—will cause the natural "somethings" in every sound organization to be the most beneficially "educated"; and that we should remove the former, and combine the latter in the most beneficial manner, and make them operative upon all? The rational system is merely this common-sense proceeding.

Mr. Kingsley asks—"Can external circumstances deliver us from internal selfishness, pride, laziness, meanness, ferocity?" Facts answer—"Yes, if you take the right circumstances, and take them in time."

Mr. Kingsley says the monks tried ten thousand "dodges" to effect this, and failed. True. But why? Because their dodges were not the right dodges. They were a mixture of good and bad circumstances, in which the power of the latter produced the bad effects which resulted. The results were the natural consequences of such a mixture of good and bad circumstances. How shall we judge them but by their fruits?

Mr. Kingsley says Mr. Owen failed. Facts say he succeeded to the full extent of the circumstances he was allowed to apply—quite sufficiently to prove the truth of the rational principle, if such proof were needed.

Mr. Kingsley says, if circumstances had formed Mr. Owen's character, he would have been at this time an idle, self-indulgent country gentleman. Facts say that some of the circumstances of his youth might have made him so; but others intervened and made him what he is.

Mr. Kingsley asks, why he and F. G. are not grubbing up pig nuts? Surely, the circumstances which account for this are not very difficult to discover.

In short, Mr. Kingsley has not yet sufficiently studied the facts of the subject—has not taken a sufficiently comprehensive view of them, or he would not object as he does to the principle in question; nor would he imagine that men and women could "rot into hogs and savages" when placed within "a scientific combination of good and superior circumstances;" or that anything but good, and that of the most exalted kind, could be produced by the right application of a doctrine which facts prove to be a practical truth pregnant with the most important and immediate beneficial practical results, and without the reception of which by society no permanent substantial reform of the present old, worn-out, irrational, and most vicious system can be effected.

HENRY TRAVIS.

#### A FREE PRESS AND A FREE EXPRESSION OF OPINIONS.

John-street, Shelton, Staffordshire Potteries,  
Sept. 15, 1850.

SIR,—I cannot conceive any subject to be more deserving of public attention than this; nor any more likely to secure the permanent elevation of a nation