

5. But this brings into view another of our special affections—our compassion for the distress, including, as one of its most prominent and frequently recurring objects, our compassion for the destitution of others. We have already seen, how nature hath provided, by one of its implanted affections, for the establishment of property; and for the respect in which, amid all its inequalities, it is held by society. But helpless destitution forms one extreme of this inequality, which a mere system of property appears to leave out; and which, if not otherwise provided for by the wisdom of nature in the constitution of the human mind, would perhaps justify an attempt by the wisdom of man to provide for it in the constitution of human law. We do not instance, at present, certain other securities which have been instituted by the hand of nature, and which, if not traversed and enfeebled by a legislation wholly uncalled for, would of themselves, prevent the extensive prevalence of want in society. These are the urgent law of self-preservation, prompting to industry on the one hand and to economy on the other; and the strong law of relative affection—which laws, if not tampered with and undermined in their force and efficacy by the law of pauperism, would not have relieved, but greatly better, would have prevented the vast majority of those cases which fill the workhouses, and swarm around the vestries of England. Still these, however, would not have prevented all poverty. A few instances, like those which are so quietly and manageably, but withal effectually met in the country parishes of