

meddled with. The spirit of kindness utterly refuses the constraints of authority ; and law in England, by taking the business of charity upon itself, instead of supplementing, hath well nigh destroyed the anterior provision made for it by nature—thus leaving it to be chiefly provided for by methods and by a machinery of its own. The proper function of law is to enforce the rights of justice, or to defend against the violation of them ; and never does it make a more flagrant or a more hurtful invasion, beyond the confines of its own legitimate territory—than when, confounding humanity with justice, it would apply the same enforcements to the one virtue as to the other. It should have taken a lesson from the strong and evident distinction which nature hath made between these two virtues, in her construction of our moral system ; and should have observed a corresponding distinction in its own treatment of them—resenting the violation of the one ; but leaving the other to the free interchanges of goodwill on the side of the dispenser, and of gratitude on the side of the recipient. When law, distrustful of the compassion that is in all hearts, enacted a system of compulsory relief, lest, in our neglect of others, the indigent should starve—it did incomparably worse, than if, distrustful of the appetite of hunger, it had enacted for the use of food a certain regimen of times and quantities, lest, neglectful of ourselves, our bodies might have