

rude village, that the democratic watchword, "Liberty and Equality," is somewhat faulty in its philosophy. Slavery and Equality would be nearer the mark. Wherever there is liberty, the original differences between man and man begin to manifest themselves in their external circumstances, and the equality straightway ceases. It is through slavery that equality, among at least the masses, is to be fully attained.*

I found but little intelligence in the neighborhood, among even the villagers and country people, that stood on a higher platform than the colliers. The fact may be variously accounted for; but so it is, that though there is almost always more than the average amount of knowledge and acquirement amongst the mechanics of large towns, the little hamlets and villages by which they are surrounded are usually inhabited by a class considerably below the average. In M. Quetelet's interesting "Treatise on Man," we find a series of maps

* The act for manumitting our Scotch colliers was passed in the year 1775, forty-nine years prior to the date of my acquaintance with the class at Niddry. But though it was only such colliers of the village as were in their fiftieth year when I knew them (with, of course, all the older ones), who had been born slaves, even its men of thirty had actually, though not nominally, come into the world in a state of bondage, in consequence of certain penalties attached to the emancipating act, of which the poor ignorant workers under ground were both too improvident and too little ingenious to keep clear. They were set free, however, by a second act passed in 1799. The language of both these acts, regarded as British ones of the latter half of the last century, and as bearing reference to British subjects living within the limits of the island, strikes with startling effect. "Whereas," says the preamble of the older act—that of 1775—"by the statute law of Scotland, as explained by the judges of the courts of law there, many colliers, and coal-bearers, and salters, are in a state of *slavery or bondage*, bound to the collieries or salt-works where they work *for life, transerable with the collicrics and salt-works*; and whereas the emancipating," &c. &c. A passage in the preamble of the act of 1799 is scarce less striking: it declares that, notwithstanding the former act, "many colliers and coal-bearers *still continue in a state of bondage*" in Scotland. The history of our Scotch colliers would be found a curious and instructive one. Their slavery seems not to have been derived from the ancient times of general serfship, but to have originated in comparatively modern acts of the Scottish Parliament, and in decisions of the Court of Sessions,—acts of a Parliament in which the poor ignorant subterranean men of the country were, of course, wholly unrepresented, and in decisions of a Court in which no agent of theirs ever made appearance in their behalf.