

ESSAYS, POLITICAL AND SOCIAL.

OUR WORKING CLASSES.

NEVER in the history of the world have so many efforts been made to improve the condition of the working classes as at the present time. The legislator, the philanthropist, the city missionary, the theorist, who would do his best to uproot the very foundations of our social system, and the man of practice, who would spare no exertion to ameliorate its actual condition, have been at work, each in his several direction, honestly, earnestly, and unremittingly toiling to a single purpose,—the elevation of our working people. We have passed laws ; we have devised model dwellings ; we have sent pious men to hunt out ignorance and vice ; we have schemed out theories that would mow down the institutions of ages ; we have speculated in the direction of secular socialism and in the direction of Christian socialism ; we have tried co-operative societies, building societies, and model lodgings ; we have written, lectured, and taught ; we have appointed commissions, printed acres of reports ; pried into every hole and corner of society (except the convents) ; we have exported hundreds of thousands of what we termed, only a year or two