

of the nation, nor the same number of men for the national labour or the national defence. In other districts where the population is dense, the stature of the people has diminished; that is, the people are undergoing a course of physical deterioration. Great numbers of our healthiest, strongest, and most athletic sons are emigrating; for it is no longer the half-starved pauper who emigrates, but the very pick of our industrial classes. The nation, powerful as it is, and perhaps presuming a little too much on its past career, is certainly at the present time undergoing a process of debilitation,—becoming relatively weaker; increasing in wealth, but not improving, or even maintaining, the solid element of a well-arranged and well-conditioned population.

To arrest the progress of this growing evil, various remedies have been proposed. Some have asserted that a total abolition of entails would effectually prevent the accumulation of estates into the hands of a single proprietor; forgetting that the estates *have* been so accumulated simply because the large estates were entailed, and the small estates were not entailed; and that the usual purchaser, whenever land is exposed for sale, is either a great proprietor or a great capitalist. When an evil has grown to a certain point, it will perpetuate itself, like iron, which, when heated to a certain temperature, will burn of its own accord. In the present condition of Britain, the abolition of entails would be quite as likely to throw the land into fewer hands as to increase the number of landholders, because the great proprietors, who have large revenues, or almost unlimited credit, will give more for the land than its actual mercantile worth, estimated by the rate of interest that might be derived from other investments. The abolition of entails would in all probability only transfer the estates of the impoverished families to those who are already possessed of extensive domains. There would be no tendency to subdivision, because the offer of ten thousand pounds for a