

easy way of solving the difficulty ; but, unfortunately, these easy methods of solution are utterly incapable of application. There are fluctuations in supply and demand which alter the value of every single item ; and unless we could make supply and demand absolutely constant, we could never apply a rule which proceeded on the distribution of the selling price. A capitalist may conduct his business for years, paying regularly for the labour he employs, and yet barely clear his expenses, when suddenly some accidental circumstance causes a great demand, a great rise in price, and he is fairly entitled, not only to the profits of the present time, but, to some extent, to the profits of past unfruitful years, and this, not because the present should pay for the past, but because the present is actually a portion of the past ; that is, the capitalist calculates on an average of profits, which average may extend over a very considerable period. Recently we have had two instances of this kind,—namely, in shipping property and in cattle-dealing. About two years since both of these businesses became highly remunerative ; but previously they had been carried on almost without profit, and in many cases with loss. Those engaged in them were fairly entitled to a certain amount of extra profit, because they had submitted to a term of years in which their returns were far below the average, and they required to recover the legitimate value of their previously-expended time and capital. Another instance we may cite, as showing the extent of fluctuation. During the Australian gold mania, seamen, hoping to reap some of the advantages, were willing to ship for the voyage *to* Australia, for, say a shilling per month ; whereas seamen shipping *from* Australia (Melbourne) obtained ten, twenty, and, we believe, in some cases thirty pounds per month. In the first case the capitalist made a large profit out of the labourer ; in the second the labourer made a large profit out of the capitalist ; but in neither case was the abso-