

is surely not so grave an offence as to merit a punishment so severe. And yet certain it is, that a legal right of this character exists in England at the present day. It exists as surely as the other legal right asserted by Paley ; nor does it in the least alter the state of the case that the prison is called a workhouse. If the poor, simply in their character as poor, had any such right to a portion of the property of their more fortunate countryfolks as that which their more fortunate countryfolks themselves have to the remainder, no legislator, Scotch or English, would dare clog that right with so degrading a condition. The labouring man has a right to be paid for his labour. Where is the despot who would venture to affirm, that in order to make that right good, the labouring man would require to go into prison ? His right was made good when he completed the stipulated work ; and it is the lack of all such solid right on the part of the pauper, in his character as a pauper, that enables British legislators to attach conditions to the fulfilment of his ill-based claims, which even Turkish or Persian despots would not dare to attach to the claims of the creditor who demanded some debt

bours. The cry is, Go to the Poor's Board. Even the sympathies of children towards their parents are dried up. This is universally spoken of as a new and shocking phase of things. It is not uncommon for young people to get married on the very day their parents go to the poor-house. In towns the state of matters is, if possible, worse. The assistance rendered by the Poor's Board becomes an absolute premium on vice. No hand is stretched out towards the *struggling* poor, because character is made of no account ; but vice and improvidence urge their claims unblushingly, and they dare not be disregarded. This is very disheartening to well-disposed individuals of the better classes who take an interest in the condition of the poor ; the more so that the poor themselves are so well aware of it. " Ah ! we will get no help," say those who strive to maintain a little outward decency ; " but let us first get drunk, and then sell everything that is left to us, and then we shall be sure of it ! " It is easier to create evils by unwise legislation than to cure them. Nevertheless, some checks upon such an unwholesome state of things ought to be devised.

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