

legally due to him. The conditions by which the legal right described by Paley may be clogged at pleasure, demonstrate that it is not a reality, but a fiction. The deserving poor have, indeed, a claim upon their wealthier brethren ; but it is a claim which human laws cannot enforce without entirely altering its character : it is a claim which bears reference to the Divine law alone, and to man's responsibility to his Maker.

Let us analyze this matter : we deem it one of considerable importance. It seems to be mainly from this want of a solid claim on the one side, and this consequent right of enforcing disagreeable conditions on the other, that compulsory assessments have so invariably the effect of setting at variance the classes on whom they are levied, with the class for whose support they are made.

We resided and laboured in this part of the country for a summer and autumn about eighteen years ago, at a time when wages were high and employment abundant. There was much dissipation among the working-classes of the period ; and one of our brother workmen, Jock Laidlie, was an extreme specimen of the more dissipated class. Pay-day came round once a fortnight, and then we were sure to lose sight of Jock for about three days. When he came back to resume his labour, he had always a miserable, par-boiled sort of look, as if he had been simmering for half-an-hour in a caldron over a slow fire. He was invariably, too, in that wretched state of spirits which in those days workmen used to term "*the horrors* ;" and as men can't get par-boiled and into "*the horrors*" for nothing, it was found in every instance that Jock's whole wages had been dissipated in the process. And such, fortnight after fortnight, was the course pursued by Jock. Now, employment, though easily enough procured in summer and autumn in Jock's profession, was always uncertain in winter, even when the winter proved fine and open ;