

degenerate into mean and ungrateful paupers. In mercy to the poor, He gave them no such rights as those contended for by Paley.

Now, it is this felt want of right to support on the part of the poor that communicates, as we have said, to those who are compelled to support them, a right of enforcing disagreeable conditions. No man has a right in this country to put another man in prison simply because he is poverty-stricken and grows old. But any man has a right to say to any other man who is destitute of support, and yet has no legitimate claim to be supported, Go into prison, and I will support you there. From the invariable tendency of a poor-law not only to perpetuate itself, but also to increase mightily in weight, by adding to the improvidence and destitution of every country in which it is established, checks are found necessary: from its tendency to harden men's hearts, these checks are almost always of a barbarous character; and hence the workhouse check. The law, as it stands in England at present, empowers one man to take another man, guilty, it may be, of no other crime save poverty, from the wife with whom he has perchance lived in happiness for many years, and the circle of mayhap an attached family, and to shut him up in a prison under the rule of a despotic jailor, and among the very refuse of mankind. And what does it give the poor man in return, as the price of his liberty, and all that he enjoyed from the sympathy and society of a circle in the round of which his attachments lie? It gives him Paley's *right* of the poor,—food, shelter, and clothing; for the two rights,—the *right* of putting in prison, and the *right* of being supported there,—have come to be balanced against each other. It gives him miserable rations of the coarsest food, scanty in quantity, mayhap unwholesome in quality; and the share of a truck-bed, with, it may be, some poor diseased wretch, as loathsome in mind as in person, for