

Well, I say there is no need for any "struggle for existence." I have shown you what things are necessary to a happy and noble existence, and I say to you now that all these things can be easily and abundantly produced.

Given our country and our people, I maintain that the people, if rightly organised and directed, can get from the country *all* that is good for them, with very little labour.

The work needed to supply the bodily and mental needs above named is very slight. The best things of life—knowledge, art, recreation, friendship, and love—are all *cheap*; that is to say they can all be got with little labour.

Why then the "struggle for existence"?

So far, Mr. Smith, I have, I hope, been practical and plain. I have indulged in no fine writing, I have used no hard words, I have kept close to facts. There has been nothing "windy" or "sentimental" up to now. I shall be still more practical as we go on.

In the meantime, if you can find Ruskin's *Modern Painters* in your free library, I should advise you to read it.

There are two other books that would be valuable; these are "England's Ideal," by Edward Carpenter, and "Signs of Change," by Wm. Morris.

CHAPTER III.

TOWN V. COUNTRY.

I would not have the labourer sacrificed to the result. I would not have the labourer sacrificed to my convenience and pride, nor to that of a great class of such as me. Let there be worse cotton and better men. The weaver should not be bereaved of his superiority to his work.—*Emerson*.

The substantial wealth of man consists in the earth he cultivates, with its pleasant or serviceable animals and plants, and in the rightly produced work of his own hands. . . . The material wealth of any country is the portion of its possessions which feeds and educates good men and women in it. . . . In fact it may be discovered that the true veins of wealth are purple—and not in Rock, but in Flesh—perhaps even that the final outcome and consummation of all wealth is in the producing as many as possible full-breathed, bright-eyed, and happy-hearted human creatures.—*Ruskin*.

Before we begin this chapter I must ask you to keep in mind the fact that a man's bodily wants are few.

I shall be well outside the mark if I say that a full grown healthy man can be well fed upon a daily ration of

- 1 lb. of bread,
- 1 lb. of vegetables,
- 1 lb. of meat.

Add to this a few groceries, a little fruit, some luxuries, in the shape of wine, beer, and tobacco; a shelter, a bed, some clothing, and a few tools and articles of furniture, and you have all the material things you need.

Remember, also, that when you have got these things you have got all the material things you can use. A millionaire or a monarch could hardly use more, or if he did use more would use them to his hurt and not to his advantage.

You live in Oldham and work in the factory in order to get a living. "A living" consists of the things above named.

I ask you, as a practical, sensible man, whether it is not possible to get those few simple things with less labour; and whether it is not possible to add to them health and the leisure to enjoy life and develop the mind?

The Manchester School will tell you that you are very fortunate to get as much as you do, and that he is a dreamer or a knave who persuades you that you can get more.

The Manchester School is the Commercial School. The supporters of that school will tell you that you cannot prosper, that is to say you cannot "get a living," without the capitalist, without open competition, and without a great foreign trade.

They will tell you that you would be very foolish to raise your own food stuffs here in England so long as you can buy them more cheaply from foreign nations. They will tell you that this country is incapable of producing enough food for her present population, and that therefore your very existence depends upon keeping the foreign trade in your hands.

Now, I shall try to prove to you that every one of these statements is untrue. I shall try to satisfy you that:—

1. The capitalist is a curse, and not a blessing.
2. That competition is wasteful, and cruel, and wrong.

3. That no foreign country can sell us food more cheaply than we can produce it; and

4. That this country is capable of feeding more than treble her present population.

We hear a great deal about the value and extent of our foreign trade, and are always being reminded how much we owe to our factory system, and how proud of it we ought to be.

I despise the factory system, and denounce it as a hideous, futile, and false thing. This is one of the reasons why the Manchester School call me a dreamer and a dangerous agitator. I will state my case to you plainly, and ask you for a verdict in accordance with the evidence.

My reasons for attacking the factory system are:—

1. Because it is ugly, disagreeable, and mechanical.
2. Because it is injurious to public health.
3. Because it is unnecessary.
4. Because it is a danger to the national existence.

The Manchester School will tell you that the destiny of this country is to become "The Workshop of the World."

I say that is not true; and that it would be a thing to deplore if it were true. The idea that this country is to be the "Workshop of the World" is a wilder dream than any that the wildest Socialist ever cherished. But if this country did become the "Workshop of the World" it would at the same time become the most horrible and the most miserable country the world has ever known.

LET us be practical, and look at the facts.

First, as to the question of beauty and pleasantness. You know the factory districts of Lancashire. I ask you is it not true that they are ugly, and dirty, and smoky, and disagreeable? Compare the busy towns of Lancashire, of Staffordshire, of Durham, and of South Wales, with the country towns of Surrey, Suffolk, and Hants.

In the latter counties you will get pure air, bright skies, clear rivers, clean streets, and beautiful fields, woods, and gardens; you will get cattle and streams, and birds and flowers, and you know that all these things are well worth having, and that none of them can exist side by side with the factory system.

I know that the Manchester School will tell you that this is mere "sentiment." But compare their actions with their words.

Do you find the champions of the factory system despising nature, and beauty, and art, and health—except in their speeches and lectures to you?

No. You will find these people living as far from the factories as they can get; and you will find them spending their long holidays in the most beautiful parts of England, Scotland, Ireland, or the Continent.

The pleasures they enjoy are denied to you. They preach the advantages of the factory system because they reap the benefits while you bear the evils.

To make wealth for themselves they destroy the beauty and the health of your dwelling-places; and then they sit in their suburban villas, or on the hills and terraces of the lovely southern countries, and sneer at the "sentimentality" of the men who ask you to cherish beauty and to prize health.

Or they point out to you the value of the "wages" which the factory system brings you, reminding you that you have carpets on your floors, and pianos in your parlours, and a week's holiday at Blackpool once a year.

But how much health or pleasure can you get out of a cheap and vulgar carpet? And what is the use of a piano if you have neither leisure nor means to learn to play it? And why should you prize that one week in the crowded, noisy watering-place, if health and fresh air and the great salt sea are mere sentimental follies?

And let me ask you is any carpet so beautiful or so pleasant as a carpet of grass and daisies? Is the fifth-rate music you play upon your cheap pianos as sweet as the songs of the gushing streams and joyous birds? And does a week at a spoiled and vulgar watering-place repay you for fifty-one weeks' toil and smother in a hideous and stinking town?

As a practical man, would you of your own choice convert a healthy and beautiful country like Surrey into an unhealthy and hideous country like Wigan or Cradley, just for the sake of being able once a year to go to Blackpool, and once a night to listen to a cracked piano?

Now I tell you, my practical friend, that you ought to have, and may have, good music, and good homes, and a fair and healthy country, and more of all the things that make life sweet; that you may have them at less cost of labour than you now pay for the privilege of existing in Oldham; and that you can *never* have them if England becomes "the Workshop of the World."

But the relative beauty and pleasantness of the factory and country districts do not need demonstration. The ugliness of Widnes and Sheffield and the beauty of Dorking and Monsal Dale are not matters of sentiment nor of argument—they are matters of fact. The value of beauty is not a matter of sentiment: it is a fact. You would rather see a squirrel than a sewer rat. You would rather bathe in the Avon than in the Irwell. You would prefer the fragrance of a rose-garden to the stench of a sewage works. You would prefer Bolton Woods to Ancoats slums.

As for those who sneer at beauty, as they spend fortunes on pictures, on architecture, and on foreign tours, they put themselves out of court.

Sentiment or no sentiment, beauty is better than ugliness, and health is better than disease.

Now under the factory system you must sacrifice both health and beauty.

As to my second objection—the evil effect of the factory system on the public health. What are the chief means to health?

Pure air, pure water, pure and sufficient food, cleanliness, exercise, rest, warmth, and ease of mind.

What are the invariable accompaniments of the factory system?

Foul air, foul water, adulterated foods, dirt, long hours of sedentary labour, and continual anxiety as to wages and employment in the present, added to a terrible uncertainty as to existence in the future.

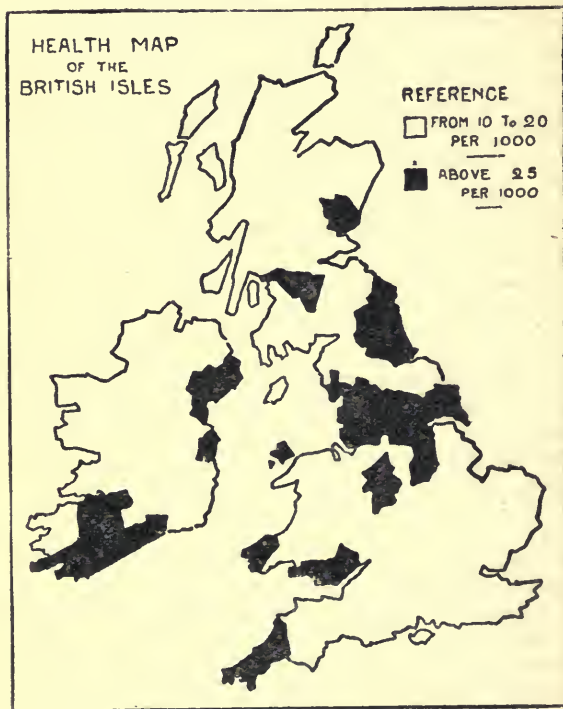
Look through any great industrial town in the colliery, the iron, the silk, the cotton, or the woollen industries, and you will find hard work, unhealthy work, vile air, overcrowding, disease, ugliness, drunkenness, and a high death-rate. These are *facts*.

To begin with, I give you outline maps, copied from Bartholomew's Gazetteer of the British Islands, which is the best work of its class extant.

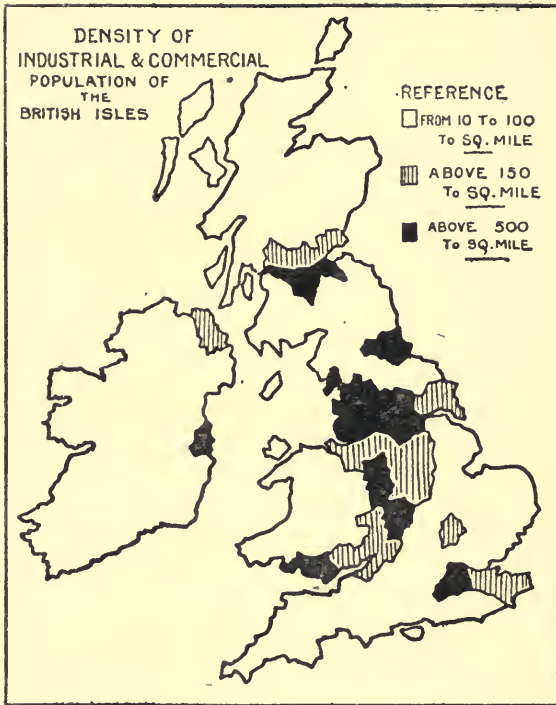
Map 1 shows the death-rates in the British Isles.

Map 2 shows the distribution of manufactures in the British Isles.

MAP 1.



MAP 2.



EXAMINE these maps and you will find that where the manufactures are the greatest the death-rate is the highest, and the population the most dense.

Turn from Bartholomew's Gazetteer to the Registrar-General's returns. The average death-rate for England and Wales from 1881 to 1890 was 19·1 in the thousand. The death-rate of Lancashire for the same period was 22·5 per thousand. But to get a fair idea of the difference between town and country we must contrast Lancashire with the

agricultural counties. Here are eight county death-rates from 1881 to 1890:—

Surrey	16·1
Kent	16·6
Sussex	15·7
Hants	16·8
Berks	16·2
Wilts	16·9
Dorset	16·2
Lancashire	22·5

In 1887, the latest year for which I have the figures, the death-rates in some of the principal Lancashire towns were:—

Bolton.....	21·31
Oldham	23·84
Salford	23·95
Preston	27·0
Blackburn	25·48
Manchester	28·67

And in that year the average death-rate in Surrey and Sussex was 16·3.

Now observe the difference between Lancashire and Surrey. It is a difference of 6 to the thousand. Lancashire in 1881 contained $3\frac{1}{2}$ millions of people, or 3,500 thousands, so that the excess of deaths in the cotton county reaches the total of 21,000.

But again, in the Registrar-General's returns for 1891 I find two tables showing the annual deaths per 100,000 of children under one year, for 1889, 1890, 1891. The first table shows the figures for the three counties of Hertford, Wilts, and Dorset; the second for the three towns, Preston, Leicester, and Blackburn.

Three farming counties	9,717
Three manufacturing towns	21,803

That is to say that the death-rate of children in those three towns is more than twice as high as the death-rate of children in those three counties.

But, again, Dr. Marshall, giving statistics of recruiting in this country, shows that not only were the country recruits taller than those from the towns, but he adds that "in every case the men born in the country were found to have better chests than those born in towns, the difference

in chest measurement being proportionately greater than the difference in stature." According to Dr. Beddoe:—

The natives of Edinburgh and Glasgow are on an average from one to two inches shorter, and about fifteen to twenty pounds lighter, than the rural population of various parts of Scotland. The statistics of the Northumberland Light Infantry give 5ft. 6in. as the height of the natives of Newcastle; while the rural volunteers have an average height of from 5ft. 8in. to 5ft. 10in., and are "of course much heavier than the townsmen."

Drs. Chassagne and Dally, in a work on gymnasia, give tables comparing the rustics and townsmen of France, which show the former to be taller and more robust. Indeed, as Mr. Gattie, in an article on the physique of European armies, says:—

A glance at the tables suffices to show the physical superiority of the countrymen at all points. Looking more closely, we find that, although the townsmen who had followed outdoor pursuits were shorter and lighter than the rest, they were able to lift and carry much greater weights.

Again, the official statistics of Switzerland tell the same story, thus:—

The butchers and bakers have much the best development, both of arm and chest; the carpenters, blacksmiths, and masons coming next. The bakers are not so tall as the butchers, blacksmiths, and carpenters, and the masons are very much shorter, but their arms are proportionately better developed than those of the carpenters and blacksmiths. The agricultural labourers and cheesemen are next in order, and then follow the wheelwrights, saddlers, and sedentary operatives, *the weakest men of all being the weavers*; while the tailors are the shortest, and are scarcely less feeble.

These are *facts*; and they seem to prove my second point, **that the factory system is bad for the public health.**
