

CHAPTER IV

Of the Change of Form, or of manufacturing Industry, comprising Agriculture.

SINCE the whole of society is but a continual succession of exchanges, we are all more or less commercial. In like manner, since the result of all our labours is never but the production of utility, and since the ultimate effect of all our manufactures is always to produce utility, we are all producers or manufacturers,—because there is no person so unfortunate as never to do any thing useful. But by the effect of social combinations, and by the separation of the different kinds of occupation which is its consequence, every one devotes himself to a particular kind of industry. That which has for its object the fashioning and modifying all the beings which surround us, to fit them for our use, we call specifically manufacturing or fabricating industry; and, for reasons before given, we comprehend in this that which consists in extracting the first materials from the elements which contain them, that is to say that which is called agricultural industry. Let us examine the processes, and manner of operation, of fabricating industry in general.

M. Say has well remarked, that in every kind of industry there are three distinct things: First, to know the properties of the bodies which we employ, and the laws of nature which govern them; secondly, to avail ourselves of this knowledge to produce an useful effect; thirdly, to execute the labour necessary to attain this object. That is to say there is in every thing, as he expresses it, theory, application, and execution.

Before the existence of society, or during its infancy, every man is for himself the fabricator of whatever he wants; and, in every species of fabrication, he is obliged to fulfil alone the three functions of which we have just spoken. But in a more advanced state of society, by the effect of the happy possibility of exchanges, not only every one devotes himself exclusively to the particular industry for which he has the most advantages; but, also, in each kind of industry, the three functions

of which we are speaking are separated. Theory is the part of the scientific, application that of the undertaker, and execution that of the workman.

These three species of labourers must derive a profit from the pains they take, for a man is born naked and destitute. He cannot amass 'till after he has gained; and before having amassed he has nothing, on which to subsist, but his physical and moral faculties;—if the use he makes of them produces nothing he must find a different method of employing them, or he will perish. Every one, then, of the labourers of whom we speak must find a salary in the profits resulting from the fabrication in which he co-operates.

But all have more or less need of advances, before they begin to receive this salary,—for it is not in an instant, and without preparation, that their service becomes sufficiently fruitful to merit a recompense.

The man of science, or he whom at this moment we consider as such, before he can have discovered or learned truths immediately useful and applicable, has had need of long studies. He has had to make researches and experiments; he has needed books and machines; in a word, he has been obliged to incur charges and expenses, before deriving any advantage from them.

The undertaker does not less experience the necessity of some preliminary knowledge, and of a preparatory education, more or less extensive. Moreover, before he begins to fabricate, he must obtain a place, an establishment, magazines, machines, first materials, and also the means of paying workmen 'till the moment of the first returns. These are enormous advances.

Finally, the poor workman himself has not certainly great funds—yet there is scarcely a trade in which he is not obliged to have some tools of his own. He has always his clothes and his small collection of moveables. If he has but simply lived 'till the moment in which his labour begins to be worth his bare subsistence, this must always be the fruit of some former labour, that is to say of some riches already acquired,—which has provided for it. Whether it be the economy of his parents, or some public establishment, or even the product of alms, which has furnished the expenses,—there are always advances which have been made for him, if not by him; and they could not have been made if every one before him had lived from day to day exactly as brute animals, and had not absolutely any thing remaining from the produce of his labour.

What, then, are all these advances, great or small? They are what are commonly called *capitals*, and what I simply name *economies*. They are the surplus of the *production* of all those who have gone before us, beyond their *consumption*,—for if the one had always been exactly equal to the other there would be no remainder, not even wherewith to raise children. We have inherited from our ancestors but this surplus; and it is this surplus, long accumulated in every way, always increasing in accelerated progression, which makes all the difference between a civilized nation and a savage horde,—a difference, the picture of which we have before sketched.

The economists have entered into many details on the nature and employment of capitals. They have recognized many different kinds. They have distinguished capitals productive and unproductive; capitals fixed, and others circulating, moveable, and immoveable, permanent, and destructible. I see no great use in all these subdivisions. Some are very contestable, others founded on very variable circumstances, and others again entirely superfluous. It seems sufficient for the object we propose to remark, that prior economies are necessary to the commencement of every industrious enterprise, even of small extent; and it is for this reason that in every country the progress of industry is at first so slow,—for it is at the commencement above all that economies are difficult;—how can it but be difficult to make any accumulations, when a person has scarcely any thing beyond strict necessities.

However, little by little, with the assistance of time and of some happy circumstances, capitals are formed. They are not all of the same kind; they are not all equal; and this gives birth to three classes of labourers, who co-operate in every fabrication, each raising himself to that to which he has been able to attain, or fixing himself at that which he has not been able to overpass. It is easy to perceive that this is the source of a great diversity in salaries. The man of science, he who can enlighten the labours of fabrication, and render them less expensive and more fruitful, will necessarily be sought after and well paid. It is true that if his knowledge is not of an immediate utility,—or if being useful it begins to diffuse itself and to become common, he will run the risk of seeing himself neglected, and even without employment; but while he is, wanted his salary will be large.

The poor workman, who has nothing but his arms to offer, has not this hope: he will always be reduced to the smallest price, which may rise a little if the demand for labour is much greater than that which is

offered; but which will fall even below the necessaries of life, if more workmen offer themselves than can be employed. It is in these cases they perish through the effect of their distresses.

These two kinds of co-operators in fabrication, the man of science and the workman, will always be in the pay of the undertaker. Thus decrees the nature of things; for it is not sufficient to know how to aid an enterprize with the head or the hands: there must first be an enterprize; and he who undertakes it, is necessarily the person who chooses, employs, and pays those who co-operate. Now who is he who can undertake it? It is the man who has already funds, with which he can meet the first expenses of establishment and supplies, and pay wages till the moment of the first returns.

What will be the measure of the recompense of this man? It will be solely the quantity of utility which he will have produced and caused to be produced. He can have no other. If having purchased an hundred francs worth of articles, whatsoever, and having expended a hundred more in changing their form, it happens that what goes from his manufactory appears to have sufficient utility to induce a person to give four hundred to procure it, he has gained two hundred francs. If he is offered only two hundred for it, he has lost his time and his pains; if he is offered but one hundred, he has lost the half of his funds; all these chances are possible. He is subject to this incertitude; which cannot affect the hireling, who always receives the price agreed on, whatever happens.

It is commonly said that the profits of the undertaker (improperly called salaries, since no one has promised him any thing,) ought to represent the price of his labour, the interest of his funds, and indemnification for the risks he has run: it is necessary and just that it should be so. I agree if you please that this is just, although the word just is here misapplied: because no one having contracted an obligation with this undertaker, to furnish him with these profits, there is no injustice committed if he does not receive them. I agree further that this is necessary, for him to continue his enterprize, and not to become disgusted with his profession. But I say that these calculations are not at all the cause of his good or bad success. This depends solely on the quantity of utility he has been able to produce, on the necessity that others are under of procuring it, and finally on the means they have of paying him for it; for that a thing should be demanded it is necessary it should be desired; and to buy it, it is not sufficient to have the desire

of possessing it, we must also have another article to give in return.

In this simple exposition, you already find all the mechanism, and the secret springs of that part of production, which consists in fabrication. You even discover the germ of the opposite interests, which are established between the undertaker and those on wages on the one part, and between the undertaker and the consumers on the other, amongst those on wages, between themselves, amongst undertakers of the same kind, even amongst undertakers of different kinds, since it is amongst all these that the means of the mass of consumers are more or less unequally divided; and finally amongst consumers themselves, since it is also amongst all of them, that the enjoyment of all the utility produced is divided. You perceive that the hirelings wish there should be few to be hired, and many undertakers, and the undertakers that there should be few undertakers, particularly in the same line as themselves, but many hirelings and also many consumers; and that the consumers, on the contrary, wish for many undertakers and hirelings, and if possible few consumers, for every one fears competition in his own way, and would wish to be alone in order to be master. If you pursue further the complication of these different interests, in the progress of society, and the action of the passions which they produce, you will soon see all these men implore the assistance of force in favour of the idea with which they are prepossessed; or, at least, under different pretexts, provoke prohibitive laws, to constrain those who obstruct them in this universal contention.

If there be a class which does not follow this direction, it will be that of the consumers; because all the world being consumers, all cannot unite to form a club, and to demand exceptions; for it is the general law, or rather liberty, which is their safe-guard. Thus it is precisely, because their interest is the universal interest, that it has no special representatives, or ravenous solicitors. It even happens that illusions divide them, and cause them to lose sight of the principal object; and that they solicit partially, and in different directions, against their real interest; for much knowledge is requisite to know it as it is general; and much justice to respect it, because the world lives on preferences. All those, on the contrary, who have a particular predominating interest, are united by it; form corporations; have active agents; never want pretexts to insist for prevalence; and abound in means, if they are rich, or if they are formidable, as are the poor in a time of troubles, that is to say when the secret of their force is revealed to them, and they are

excited to abuse it.

At this moment it is not necessary to follow so far the consequences of the facts which we have established. Let us observe only, that the most necessary labours are the most generally demanded, and the most constantly employed; but, also, that it is in the nature of things, that they should always be the most moderately paid for. This cannot be otherwise. In effect, the things which are necessary to all men, are of an universal and continual use. But, for this reason alone, many occupy themselves constantly in their fabrications, and have soon learnt to produce them, by well known processes, and which require only common understanding; thus they have necessarily become as cheap as possible. Moreover it is indispensable they should not be dear; for almost their whole consumption is always made by people who have but few means, inasmuch as the poor are every where the most numerous, and are every where also the greatest consumers of necessary things, which indeed compose almost their whole expense. If then they were not at a low price they would cease to be consumed, and the poor could not subsist. It is on the lowest price to which they can be brought, that the lowest price of wages is regulated; and the workmen, who labour in their fabrication, are necessarily comprised in this latter class of the lowest wages.

Remark also, that there is nothing in what we have just said of manufacturing industry, which is not as applicable to agriculture as to all other species of fabrication. There are, in like manner, in agriculture, theory, application, and execution; and we find there the three kinds of labourers, relative to these three objects. But what applies eminently to agriculture, is the general truth which we have established, that labours the most necessary are, from this circumstance alone, the worst paid. In effect, the most important and most considerable productions of agriculture, are the cereal plants with which we are nourished. Now I ask to what price corn would rise, if all those employed in its production, were as dearly paid as those who labour in the arts of the most refined luxury? Certainly the poor workmen of all the common trades, could not attain it; they must absolutely die of hunger, or their wages must rise to a level with those of agricultural workmen; but then those of the others would rise likewise in proportion, since they are more sought after; thus the first would not be advanced. They would always be at the lowest possible rate; such is the law of necessity.

What is true of agricultural workmen comparatively with other

workmen, is true of agricultural undertakers comparatively with other undertakers. Their processes are well known. It requires but a middling understanding to employ them. Results of a long experience; during the existence of which numerous essays have been made, and, more than is commonly believed, they are in general well enough adapted to the localities; and there are few means of ameliorating them sufficiently, sensibly to augment their profits, whatever may be said by rash speculators who from time to time nearly ruin themselves. Thence it is, that, without extraordinary circumstances,* the profits of agricultural undertakers are very small in proportion to their funds, their risks, and their pains. Moreover, these well known and very simple processes, are nevertheless very embarrassing in practice; they require much care and time, so that in this state, one man can never be sufficient for the employment of large funds. He could not for example direct at the same time five or six farms even if he should have live or six times five or six thousand francs to stock them; and yet this is but a moderate sum, in comparison with certain lines of commerce. Thus this man, who cannot make great profits in proportion to his funds, is at the same time unable to employ considerable funds. It is then impossible that he should ever make a real fortune. This is the reason why there always are and ever will be few capitals employed in agriculture, in comparison with the quantity of those which exist in society. Let us prove this truth by facts; they will show us at the same time why agricultural operations often take different forms, which have not, or do not appear to have any thing analogous in the other arts. It is an interesting subject, which I have not yet seen well explained in any of our books on agriculture, or of economy.

You never see, or at least very rarely, a man having funds, activity, and a desire of augmenting his fortune, employ his money in buying a large extent of land, to cultivate it, and make of it his profession for life. If he buys it, it is to sell again; or to find resources necessary to

*One of these circumstances, the most extraordinary, is, without contradiction, the discovery of the advantages of the propagation of Spanish sheep, instead of those of the country. This is the immortal glory of M. D'Aubenton, and the fruit of thirty years perseverance. Well! What has happened since this has been established? Even before the cultivator could procure these animals, and before he well knew the manner of deriving advantage from them, he gives already a much higher rent for lands on which he hoped to be able to raise them: That is to say, a part of the profits is taken from him in advance; the remainder will not fail to be taken from him at the next lease.

some other enterprize; or to take from it a cutting of wood; or for some other speculation, more or less transitory. In a word, it is an affair of commerce, and not of agriculture. On the contrary, you often see a man possessed of a good landed estate sell it, to employ the price in some enterprize, or to procure for himself some lucrative situation. It is because culture is not really the road to fortune.

Accordingly, almost all the rich who purchase lands, if they are in business, do it because they have greater funds than they can employ in their speculations; or because they wish to place a part beyond the reach of hazard. If they are in public stations, or if they do nothing but live at their ease, it is to place their funds in a solid and agreeable manner. But neither the one nor the other propose to occupy themselves the land which they buy. Be it pleasure or business, they always have something which interests them more. They hope never to have any further trouble with them, than to rent them to undertakers of culture, as they would rent* the money which has served to purchase them, and receive the interest, without troubling themselves whether its employment has produced loss or profit to the borrower, who makes use of it.

It is perhaps fortunate that the rich thus purchase lands to rent them; for agriculture being a laborious and little profitable profession, those who devote themselves to it have generally small means, as we have just observed. If they were obliged to begin by buying the land they wish to cultivate, all their funds would be absorbed; there would nothing remain for the other advances necessary to culture, and still they could undertake but small enterprizes. It is then more convenient for them to find lands to be rented, than to be forced to buy them; but this is not more convenient to them than it is convenient to other undertakers, and to themselves, to find money to borrow, when they need it to give a greater extent to their enterprizes; and this is only advantageous to them under the same restrictions, that is to say it lessens

*It will be matter of astonishment to hear me say *rent* money, as we say rent lands, or a house; but I am more justly surprised, that when they say lend money, they do not also say to lend land—for it is the same thing. The truth is, we ought not to say lend but in cases of gratuitous loans.

When we have a property whatsoever, there are but six ways of using it. To preserve or destroy it, to give or sell it, to lend or rent it. They do not precisely destroy lands, but they keep them or give them, or sell them, or lend them, or rent them, as they do every thing else. There is the same difference between lending and renting, as between giving and selling.

their profits and renders their situation more precarious; for it is well known that a merchant, who does not carry on at least the greater part of his business on his own funds, is in a very dangerous situation, and rarely has great success. However, such is the situation even of those whom we call great farmers.

In a word, proprietors who let lands are lenders, and nothing more. It is very singular that we have almost always confounded and identified their interest with that of agriculture, to which it is as foreign as that of the lenders of money is to all the enterprizes undertaken by those to whom they lend. We cannot sufficiently wonder to see that almost all men, and particularly agricolists, speak of great proprietors of land with a love and respect truly superstitious; regard them as the pillars of the state, the soul of society;* the foster fathers of agriculture,—while they most frequently lavish horror and contempt on the lenders of money, who perform exactly the same office as the others.† A rich incumbent who has just let a farm exorbitantly high considers himself as a very clever, and what is more, as a very useful man; he has not the least doubt of his scrupulous probity, and he does not perceive that he is exactly the same thing as the most pinching usurer, whom he condemns without hesitation, and without pity. Perhaps even his farmer, whom he ruins, does not any more than himself see this perfect similitude; so much are men the dupes of words. It is true that so long as they are so, they understand things badly; and, reciprocally, so long as they understand badly the things of which they speak, they but imperfectly comprehend the words which they use. I cannot help returning frequently to this fact, for it is a great inconvenience to just reasoning; which, however, we must endeavour to attain in every matter.

However it be, much land being in the hands of the rich, there is much to be rented; and this, as we have said, is the reason why there may be a great number of enterprizes of agriculture, although there is not a proportionate mass of funds in the hands of the men who consecrate themselves to this state. In time these rented lands arrange and distribute themselves in the manner the most favourable to the

*If it is in considering them as men in general, enlightened and independent, it is just; but if in their quality of proprietors of land, it is absurd.

†The lenders of land have even a great advantage over the others, because when they have found a mean of obtaining a higher rent, they have by this circumstance augmented their capital: land is sold according to its rents. This does not happen to the lenders of money.

conveniencies of those who intend to work them. Hence arise to great proprietors different kinds of rural work, which are not the effect of caprice or of hazard, as is believed without reflection, but which have their causes in the nature of things, as we shall see.

In fertile countries the fecundity of the soil does not turn directly to the profit of him who cultivates it, for the proprietor does not fail to demand a rent as much higher as they are more productive. But this land yielding a great deal, the quantity which a man can employ furnishes a considerable mass of production. Now all things being otherwise equal, as the profits of every undertaker are always proportioned to the extent of his fabrication, here the profits may be sufficiently great to attract the attention of men possessed of a certain degree of care and capacity. Once again, it is not the fecundity of the soil which has enriched and enlightened them; but it is this fecundity which attracts them, and prevents them from transferring their means to other speculations. These men wish to make a profit from all their means; they would not be satisfied with a small work, which would leave useless a part of their funds and personal activity, and would yield them, but small profits. For their convenience great properties are distributed into large masses of land, of commonly from three to five hundred acres, with a good habitation near them. They desire nothing else. They bring the gear, teams, cattle, provisions, sufficient to enable them to wait; they do not fear being long without receiving, to receive yet more in the end. They make essays, they sometimes discover new means of production, or of sale. In a word they fabricate, they trade, and hold their rank amongst the undertakers of industry. These are our great farmers, and this our great culture. Notwithstanding these fine names, a great farm is yet without doubt a sufficiently small manufactory; but if it is almost the minimum of fabricating industry in general, it is the maximum of agricultural industry in particular.

When the soil is less fertile, this industry cannot raise itself to this point. Put the same number of acres in a farm, and the productions will be insufficient. Put therein the double, and one man will not be sufficient by himself to work it;* besides the expenses and risks augment in a greater proportion—the enterprize is no longer worth the pains.

*If he takes it, it will be to under-rent and divide it. Then he will be a parasite being a speculator and not a cultivator. This is done by the principal farmers of large farms where they are let on half-stocks. Their object is traffic.

You cannot then find the same kind of men to undertake it. And if there be capitals somewhat considerable, and intelligence in those cantons, they will be carried elsewhere. What then happens? These lands, which already yield less, the proprietors divide into still smaller portions, to place them within the competence of more persons of those of slender means, and who often even do not make the cultivation of these lands their sole occupation. It is in these places that you often see small farms, or simply houses with very little land, or even lands without any buildings. Yet these grounds are rented. Those who take them, even bring to them the instruments and animals indispensable. In short they make a profit from them, by their own labour; but it is not to be expected that they should display there the same physical and moral means, as the great farmers of whom we have just spoken. They are generally small rural proprietors who are found in these places, who join this work to their former occupations, and are contented if the whole together furnishes them with the means of living and rearing a family, without pretending much to augment their ease, and without the possibility of it, but by extraordinary chances. This is what many writers call small culture, in opposition to that of which we have just spoken. Yet we shall see that there are several cultures still smaller, or, if you please, more miserable than this. Observe always that this kind of small culture and even that by hand, of which we shall soon speak, ordinarily pay a higher rent to proprietors than the great, in proportion to the quantity and quality of the land, by the effect of the concurrence of those who present themselves in great numbers to work it, because they have no other industry within their reach; but it is precisely this high rent which irrevocably fixes these cultivators in that state of mediocrity, or penury, which renders their culture so indifferent.

When the soil is still more ungrateful, or when by the effect of different circumstances the small rural proprietors are rare, the great proprietors of land have not this resource of forming small farms; they would not be worth the trouble of working them and there would be no body applying for them. They adopt then another plan: They form what are commonly called domains or half-shares (*métairies*); and they frequently attach thereto as much or more land than is contained in the great farms, particularly if they do not disdain to take into account the waste lands, which commonly are not rare in these places, and which are not entirely without utility, since they are employed

for pasture, and even now and then are sown with corn to give rest to the fields more habitually cultivated. These *métairies*, as we have seen, are sufficiently large as to extent, and very small as to product; that is to say they require great pains and yield little profit. Accordingly none can be found having funds who are willing to occupy them, and to bring to them domestics, moveables, teams and herds. They will not incur such expenses to gain nothing. It is as much as these *métairies* would be worth, were they abandoned for nothing, without demand of any rent. The proprietor is himself then obliged to stock them with beasts, utensils and every thing necessary for working them; and to establish thereon a family of peasants, who have nothing but their hands; and with whom he commonly agrees, instead of giving them wages, to yield them half of the product, as a recompense for their pains. Thence they are called *métayers*, workers on half-shares.

If the land is too bad, this half of the produce is manifestly insufficient to subsist, even miserably, the number of men necessary to work it. They quickly run in debt, and are necessarily turned away. Yet others are always found to replace them, because these are always wretched people who know not what to do. Even those go elsewhere, often to experience the same fortune. I know some of these *métairies* which, in the memory of man, have never supported their labourers on the half of their fruits. If the *métairie* is somewhat better, the half-sharers vegetate better or worse; and sometimes even make some small economies, but never enough to raise them to the state of real undertakers. However, in those times and cantons in which the country people are somewhat less miserable, we find in this class of men some individuals who have some small matter in advance; as for example, so much as will nourish them during a year in expectation of the first crop, and who prefer taking a *métairie* on lease, at a fixed rent, rather than to divide the produce of it. They hope by very hard labour to derive a little more profit from it. These are in general more active, and gain something if the ground permits, if they are fortunate, if their family is not too numerous, if they have not given too great a rent for the land; that is to say if a number of circumstances rather improbable have united in their favour. Yet we cannot regard them as true farmers, as real undertakers; since it is always the proprietor who furnishes the gear, the beasts, &c. and they contribute only their

labour. Thus it is still proper to range them in the class of half-sharers.

The mass of beasts, which the proprietor delivers and confides to the half-sharer, is called cheptel. It increases every year by breeding, in places where they raise the young, and the half-sharer divides the increase as he divides the harvest; but on quitting he must return a cheptel of equal value with that he received on entering; and, as he has nothing to answer, the proprietor or his agent keeps an active watch over him, to prevent him from encroaching on the funds by too great a sale. In some places, the proprietors not being willing or able to furnish the stock of cheptel, there are cattle merchants, or other capitalists, who furnish them, who watch over the half-sharer in like manner, and take half the increase as the interest of their funds; on the whole, it is very indifferent to the half-sharer, whether they or the proprietor do it. In every case we can only see in him a miserable undertaker, without means, weighed down by two lenders at high premiums, (he who furnishes the land and he who furnishes the cattle,) who take from him all his profits, and leave him but a bare and sometimes insufficient subsistence. It is for this reason that this kind of cultivation is also justly called small culture, although it is exercised on sufficiently large masses of property.

There exists still another species of work to which the name of small culture is also given. It is that of small rural proprietors, who labour their lands themselves. Almost all the nations of modern Europe have set out from an order of things, wherein the totality of the soil was the exclusive property of a small number of great proprietors; and all the rest of the population laboured solely for them as domestics, as serfs, or as hirelings. But by the effect of industry always acting, and of successive alienations, there has been found in almost every country a greater or less number of these small proprietors of land, who all have this in common, that they live on their land, and their trade is to cultivate it. However, with respect to culture, it is wrong to arrange them all in the same class—for amongst them are some who have a somewhat considerable extent of ground; and it is particularly on poor lands we find them, because it is these that the rich have alienated in preference, not being able often to draw any thing from them themselves. These certainly do not incur the same expenses in their culture as the rich farmers of great farms; but they labour with draught animals of a better or worse quality, and they have some flocks. In a word, their

work is absolutely similar to that of the small farmers, of whom we have spoken before.* There are others again who possess a very small extent of ground, and who work it with their hands alone,—whether in vegetables, or in grain, or vines. These even positively require this manner of working—which, as we see, is very different from the preceding: besides the greater part of those who thus employ themselves cannot live solely on the produce of their soil, and undertake day labour a part of the year. We must assimilate to these latter all those who hold on leases from rich persons small habitations, with spots of ground attached to them; and who are known by the name of tenants, labourers, cottagers, &c. &c. Their industry is absolutely the same, and their existence quite similar; except that the small rent they pay represents the interest of the capital which the others possess: Here, then, is a third thing which is also called *small culture*; and which comprehends two kinds of it, very different from each other.

This is not all—there are many writers who call *great culture* that which is done with horses, and *small culture* that which is done with oxen; and who believe that this division answers exactly to that of farmers and half-sharers. But these two designations are far from being equivalent, for on one side the labourers work with their hands:—nothing prevents the cultivators of small farms, and the small proprietors of the first of the two species which we have distinguished, from labouring sometimes with horses or mules; and these cultures do not the less deserve the name of small. Moreover it may well be if such should be the local conveniences, that the great farmers may work with oxen; and I believe this is seen in several countries. On the other side, it is true that in general the half-sharers work with oxen: 1st. Because this method being less expensive, the greater part of proprietors prefer it. 2d. Because commonly the poor countries, which are those where we see half-sharers, produce bad hay, little or no oats, and are not susceptible of artificial meadows. 3d. Because these half-sharers being negligent and unskilful, it is difficult to confide to

*See what is the difference of the employment of funds. This man, who cultivates on a small scale, has perhaps an estate on which he could raise thirty thousand francs. If he would sell it he would have wherewithal to take a great farm in a good country; he would be much better, and would gain more: But perhaps he does not know that this possibility exists far from him. Were he to know it he would fear the risks and his own inexperience: and, besides, man holds to his habits, and to the pleasure of property.

them animals so delicate as horses. But it is not this which constitutes them half-sharers, and which distinguishes between them and farmers. Their specific character is that of being wretched, without means, and unable to make any advances. It is that which reduces them to be half-sharers, and makes their culture really small; although by reason of the extent of their *métairies*, which commonly occupy a great deal of ground, there are some who still call it *great culture*, in opposition to that of small farmers or small labourers, or in opposition only to culture by hand.

Finally, that nothing may be wanting to the confusion of ideas, there are some anglo-man authors (as Arthur Young) who amuse themselves by calling small culture that of our greatest farmers, because they there see lands at rest, reversing exclusively the name of great culture for that system of rotation which themselves approved,—without reflecting that in the smallest of all cultures, that by hand, we most frequently see land that is never suffered to rest.

Thus we see by fair statement five or six different manners of employing the same words, of which two or three at least separate things absolutely similar, and unite others totally different; and these words are continually used without explaining in which sense they are taken. Proceeding thus, it would be a great miracle if they should understand one another.

I think if it is wished to write with some precision on agriculture, we must banish the expressions great and small culture as too equivocal; but distinguish carefully four sorts of culture, which have very distinct characters, because they are essentially different; and under which we can arrange all imaginable cultures.* These are first the *great farms*, or the culture of rich and intelligent undertakers, who make largely all the necessary advances. We see them only in places worth the trouble. 2dly. The *small farms*, or the culture of undertakers who likewise employ draught animals of their own, but whose means of all kinds are less extensive. They are generally found on poorer soils. (This class includes the small farmers, and the small proprietors, of the first

*If I dare to affirm this, it is not because I have travelled much; but I have had property for about forty years, in a country of great farms, a country of vineyards, and of bad half-shares. I have always followed their progress with attention; and more with a view to the general effect than to any particular interest. I have effected sensible ameliorations in the two latter and I am persuaded that when we have thus a sufficient field of observation we gain more by thoroughly examining than by multiplying them.

of the two species which I have distinguished.) 3dly. The métairies, or the culture by half-sharers, who also employ draught animals, but which do not belong to them. This is peculiar to bad soils. 4thly. Day labourers, or the culture by hand, as well that of proprietors as of tenants. We find these everywhere, and especially in vine countries. But they are in general less numerous in very good or in very bad countries: In the first because the rich have kept almost all the land, in the others because the land would not compensate them, and they prefer going to seek their livelihood by day labour elsewhere. This division appears to me clearer and more instructive than all the others, because it shows the causes of the effects. Let us therefore use it as to what remains for us to say.

I think I have proved that the proprietors of lands, who do not work them themselves, have absolutely nothing in common with agriculture, nor with the laws which govern it, nor with the interests which direct it; that they are purely and solely annuitants and lenders of a particular kind; and, consequently, that having to give an account of the fabrication of the products, I ought to put them aside, and consider only the undertakers of culture.

Then I have shown that it is indispensable that the undertakers of the most necessary fabrications should be, of all others, those who make the most slender profits, in proportion to the quantity of their advances and productions; and further, that agricultural undertakings have this particular inconvenience, that one man is not sufficient to give them so great an extent as to compensate for the smallness of his profits by the greatness of his business.

I have shown afterwards—First, that the most fertile countries are those alone, in which the products of the quantity of land which one man can manage are sufficiently considerable to make the lot of the undertaker tolerable; that it is for these reasons that those countries are also the only ones in which we see undertakers of culture having sufficient means and capacity; and that they moreover seldom act on their own funds, but on those of others,—which is always a disadvantageous situation for fabricators. We call them, however, great farmers.

2dly. That when the lands are less good, the profits become so very slender, that we can no longer find but indifferent and insufficient undertakers. These are the *small farmers*.

3dly. That when the soil is still worse, the profits becoming absolutely null, the owner is reduced to the necessity of having no under-

taker; for half-sharers are really but receivers of wages, since they make no advances and furnish only their labour.

4thly. and finally, That other circumstances render the enterprize so small that the undertaker and labourer are necessarily one and the same person, who employ no machine but their hands, and employ even them often elsewhere. Such are the day labourers. Such a business can scarcely tempt a capitalist.

There is, however, an exception to these general truths. It is in favour of the culture of very precious productions: such as certain drugs for dying, or wines highly esteemed. There great profits may be made. Accordingly we sometimes see great capitalists buy lands suitable to these productions, cultivate them themselves, draw from them all their profits, and make of them immense and fortunate speculations. But this exception itself confirms the rule; for these productions have the merit and the price of rarities. They are a real merchandise of luxury. Thus these speculations, although agricultural, are not in the class of fabrications of things of the first necessity.

If this picture is exact, if it is a faithful representation of facts, if it is true that agriculture, even under the most favourable circumstances, is not and cannot be but a laborious and not very profitable profession, we must not be astonished that it does not hold the first rank in society, and that capitals do not seek it. We should perceive that they are not and never will be so employed but by those who cannot or know not how to employ them otherwise. The only mean of causing numerous capitals to be employed in agriculture is, then, to cause them to superabound elsewhere. This evil, if it be one, is incurable; and it is very useful to know it. For however we may say that agriculture is the first of arts; that it is the foster mother of man; that it is his natural destination; that we are wrong in not honouring it more; that the emperor of China ploughs a furrow every year, and a thousand similar fine things; all this will amount to nothing, and will change nothing in the march of society: These are vain declamations which do not merit our attention. Let us make only some short reflections on the first of these phrases, because it conceals an error. To bring it to light is to refute it.

Certainly agriculture is the first of arts in relation to necessity; for before all things we must eat in order to live. If they mean to say this only, they say what is incontestable but very insignificant. If they understand by these words that agriculture is the only art absolutely

necessary, the assertion is very inexact; for we have other very pressing wants besides that of eating, as for example that of being clothed and lodged. Moreover culture itself, in order to be in a small degree developed, needs the succour of many other arts, such as that of melting metals and fashioning wood; and its products, to be completely appropriated to our use, still require at least that of the miller and baker. Here then we see many other indispensable arts.

Finally, if they have pretended to affirm, as many will have it, that agriculture is the first of arts in relation to riches, the pretended axiom is completely false. In the first place we have seen, in respect to individuals, that those who devote themselves to agriculture are inevitably of the number of those who make the smallest profits: thus they cannot be of the richest. Now what is true of every individual cannot be false of nations, which are but collections of individuals. If you doubt the strength of this demonstration place on one side twenty thousand men occupied in the cultivation of wheat for sale, and on the other an equal number occupied in making watches. Suppose that both find a market for their produce, and see which will be the richest: Such are Geneva and Poland.

One of the things which has most contributed to the mistake of so manifest a truth is also an equivocal expression. We take very frequently our means of *subsistence* for our means of *existence*. These are two very different things. Our means of subsistence are without contradiction alimentary matters; and the quantity of these that can be procured in a country is the necessary limit of the number of men who can live therein. But our means of existence is the sum of the profits we can make by our labour, and with which we can procure for ourselves both subsistence and other enjoyments. It is in vain that the Polander raises a great quantity of wheat: the overplus of what he consumes, which he is obliged to sell to foreigners at a low price, with difficulty supplies his other wants. He does not live the better on it, nor multiply more. The Genevan, on the contrary,—who does not gather even a potatoe, but makes great profit on the watches he fabricates,—has that with which he can buy grain and all other things necessary for him; on which he can bring up his children, and likewise economise. The first, notwithstanding the great quantity of his means of subsistence, has very few of the means of existence: The second, having great means of existence, procures abundantly the articles of subsistence which he has not, and whatever else he wants. It is therefore true that these are

two things, which it is very wrong not to distinguish carefully. This fault, shows itself in many otherwise excellent works, (particularly in that of Mr. Malthus on population) in which it casts an ambiguity over some explications, valuable in all respects. It is therefore a point which it was well to elucidate.

Let me not, however, be accused of mistaking the importance of agriculture, and of wishing that it should be neglected. In the first place I know very well that, although useful in itself, it is not the only thing to be desired either for individuals or for societies; and that a nation, notwithstanding great means, has but a precarious existence if it depends on strangers for its subsistence. I know, moreover, that although each single enterprize of culture cannot be regarded but as a very small manufactory, as in a large country their number is immense in comparison with that of all other fabrications, they compose a very great portion of the industry and wealth of a nation. The great details into which I have gone to analyse the operation of all the springs of agricultural industry, prove sufficiently the importance I attach to it; and certainly to show clearly that a profession is at the same time very necessary, and very unprofitable, is the best method of proving that it should be favoured. But we have not yet reached this point. The only object at present is to establish facts. We will afterwards draw their conclusions; and if the first of these operations has been well performed the second will not be difficult. Let us confine ourselves then to these generalities on fabricating industry, and speak of commercial industry.