There appear to me many and important exceptions to several of the doctrines of Jeremy advanced in this Treatise; yet it is an excellent work, while these exceptions.

S. T. C.

Patrick Colquhoun,

- A TREATISE on INDIGENCE, - 1806.

Coleridge's copy, with autographic marginal notes, and note on fly-leaf signed "S. T. C."

Portrait of Coleridge inserted.
PRELIMINARY EULOGIATIONS.

would be no labour, and without labour there could be no riches, no refinement, no comfort, and no benefit to those who may be possessed of wealth—inasmuch as without a large proportion of poverty surplus labour could never be rendered productive in procuring either the conveniencies or luxuries of life.

Indigence therefore, and not poverty, is the evil. It is that condition in society which implies want, misery, and distress. It is the state of any one who is destitute of the means of subsistence, and is unable to labour to procure it to the extent nature requires. The natural source of subsistence is the labour of the individual; while that remains with him he is denominated poor; when it fails in whole or in part he becomes indigent.

The condition of man is susceptible of four material distinctions:

1. Utter inability to procure subsistence — — Indigence.

2. Inadequate ability — — Povery.

3. Adequate ability and no more — poverty.

4. Extra ability, which is the ordinary state of man, and is the source of wealth.

But it may happen, and does sometimes happen in civil life, that a man may have ability to labour, and cannot obtain it. He may have labour in his possession, without being able to dispose of it.

The great desideratum, therefore, is to prop up
poverty by judicious arrangements at those critical periods when it is in danger of descending into indigence. The barrier between these two conditions in society is often slender, and the public interest requires that it should be narrowly guarded, since every individual who retrogrades into indigence becomes a loss to the body politic, not only in the diminution of a certain portion of productive labour, but also in an additional pressure on the community by the necessary support of the person and his family who have thus descended into indigence.

It is the province of all governments by wise regulations of internal police to call forth the greatest possible proportion of industry, as the best and surest means of producing national happiness and prosperity.

The poor in England, and indeed in all northern climates, have many indispensable wants not peculiar to southern countries—such as fuel, clothes, bedding, and shelter from cold. These are some of the physical causes which produce indigence and wretchedness, and render poverty worse in a state of civilization than in savage life.

But there are many other causes which produce indigence in a state of civilization, which it is physically impossible to avoid, and therefore a provision in some shape or other has been made in all nations for persons unable to procure the means of subsistence. In few instances, excepting in

*man is provided. for he has been robbed by his unnatural descendants of the very house. Some of his human nature, sheltered, the furniture of his soul. S.R.C. see Milton's Comus.
to live better, and to enjoy the comforts arising from
a greater variety of food, on much lower wages
than their southern fellow-subjects receive, who,
although they eat wheaten bread, upon the whole
fare infinitely worse, and work equally hard.

The obstruction to that species of competition
which produced an unequal price for labour in
districts at no great distance from one another, is
in some respects removed by the improvements in
the law of settlements; but it may be worth consi-
deration whether legislative obstructions to its free
circulation do not still exist, since, if labour is re-
strained, it never can be expected to find its true
level.

It may be also worthy of inquiry, whether undue
means are not sometimes used to prevent the
wages of labourers in agriculture from reaching
their natural level, in proportion to what is paid
for the labour of persons in other occupations of
life, where the competition has a freer and a more
extended scope.

Considering the rapid and progressive increase
of all the productions of the soil, it should seem
evident that the agricultural labourer ought at
least to receive that portion of the profits of his
own industry which shall enable him with frugality
to support his family without calling (except in
extreme cases) on the parish for relief.

If ever (as has been alleged) the parochial
funds have been resorted to for the purpose of
A REPOSITORY OF USEFUL INFORMATION. 103

As these papers will contain nothing of what is denominated news, although much that will be infinitely more beneficial in disseminating useful information, calculated to improve the morals of the people, no stamp will be required, and they may be afforded at an expense of not more than one penny halfpenny weekly for each paper.

V. It will be the duty of the commissioners to receive information, and to correspond with the magistrates in every county, city, and corporate and other town, in England and Wales, respecting all matters connected with the functions assigned to them; and to receive from the justices in sessions, a periodical return of the state of all gaols and houses of correction, specifying in a table, according to a form to be prescribed, the number of prisoners, their offences, the manner in which they are employed in houses of correction, the diet and clothing, the expense incurred in each year, the raw materials purchased, the manufactured articles sold, the profit derived from the labour of the prisoners, the salaries of the gaoler, chaplain, surgeon, and other persons employed, and all other information necessary to enable the board to form a complete judgment as to the improvements necessary to be recommended by an accurate inspection of each return, and by comparing one return with another.

VI. It will be the duty of the commissioners to avail themselves of the practical experience they

It has been shewn, in the progress of this work, that the virtuous poor are subject to numerous casualties incident to a state of civilization, by which they may retrograde into indigence, without any culpable cause. A national system, which would enable this valuable part of the community, from their own resources, effectually to provide against such a degradation, producing unmerited misery and distress, would be a godlike work.—To this class, contingent aids are peculiarly applicable, and it is through this medium, under a well-constructed national institution, that security is to be afforded against the calamity of indigence, either in the progress of human life, while labour remains in their possession, or in old age, when it ceases to be productive.

Friendly societies appear to have existed in most parts of Great Britain at least from the commencement of the preceding century; but their progress was slow until within the last fifty years, since which period they have gradually increased. In the year 1793 they were first recognised by the legislature, and assisted by some provisions calculated to give a legal feature* to these associations, and greater

* Of this legal feature many of the societies, however, have not chosen to avail themselves; since out of 9672 associations