

There appear to me many and important  
exceptions to several of the doctrines & propo-  
sitions advanced in this Treatise; yet it is an  
excellent Book spite of these exceptions.

S. T. C.

Patrick Colquhoun,-

- A TREATISE on INDIGENCE,- 1806.

OK Coleridge's copy, with auto-  
graphic marginal notes, and  
note on fly-leaf signed

"S. T. C."

Portrait of Coleridge in-  
serted.



\* Certainly! if the present state of general Intellect and morals  
be supposed

PRELIMINARY ELUCIDATIONS.

fair average of the capabilities of society. Otherwise, I cannot see why without this Poverty (even as here contra. dis-  
-tinguished from Indigence) A might not agree to make shoes, B. Cloth.  
C. Dricks - & C: and the whole pulchritude of Labor carry on a similar Barter to the present, even tho' one think of society were not devoted to the production of to waste & debase ing luxuries for whom who are privileged to live in Idleness -  
For man, the Separation of Poverty is insidious - he is not a poor, whose subsistence depends on constant Industry, but he whose bare want cannot be <sup>bodily</sup> supplied without such unceasing labor from the hour of waking to that of sleeping, as precludes all improvement of mind - & makes the intellectual faculties to the majority of mankind as useless a boon as picture to the

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 - - - }
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

insidious - he is not a poor, whose subsistence depends on constant Industry, but he whose bare want cannot be <sup>bodily</sup> supplied without such unceasing labor from the hour of waking to that of sleeping, as precludes all improvement of mind - & makes the intellectual faculties to the majority of mankind as useless a boon as picture to the



*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.

*scarcely felt in*

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 guardians of the very house. Coon of his human nature, stripped of the furniture of his soul. S. J. C. See Mutton's Comus, line 765 to 779.*



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 consideration whether legislative obstructions to its free circulation do not still exist, since, if labour is restrained, 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

*I In More  
Countries of the  
N. of England,  
with which I am  
best acquainted,  
the wages are  
much higher than  
in the South, & the  
labourers do  
not work nearly  
so hard. S. P. C.*



† Surely, if no other news were published in this Paper, than what had been in the government Gazette, & this one paper compiled from the Daily, it would be a great inducement to the common people to read & to be thankful for it. What can you keep up

A REPOSITORY OF USEFUL INFORMATION. 103

I 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

in these  
with a look  
if you remove  
all interest  
all excitement  
of feeling  
and  
immigration  
from them  
in the  
various  
events of  
their country?  
see



*gulations detailed for the Government of the Institution.—Concluding Observations on the great Utility of the Measure.*

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

*on this  
paragraph  
I venture  
to remark  
that it  
may be  
taken as  
an axiom  
that no  
man is capable of legislative wisdom, whose heart is  
not filled with the love of his kind, with the understanding  
of Liberty, & who is not capable of perceiving the  
vast importance of indirect as well as general  
consequences, and of balancing them against  
particular, immediate conveniences & inconveniences.  
J. H. C.*