

and want of adaptation to the general good that almost always defeats his aims. He sees and understands but a minute portion; it is always some partial good he would introduce; and thus he but destroys the just proportions of a nicely-regulated system of things, by exaggerating one of the parts. I passed of late through a richly-cultivated district of country, in which the agricultural improver had done his utmost. Never were there finer fields, more convenient steadings, crops of richer promise, a better regulated system of production. Corn and cattle had mightily improved; but what had man, the lord of the soil, become? Is not the body better than food, and life than raiment? If that decline for which all other things exist, it surely matters little that all these other things prosper. And here, though the corn, the cattle, the fields, the steadings had improved, man had sunk. There are but two classes in the district: a few cold-hearted speculators, who united what is worst in the character of the landed proprietor and the merchant, — these were young gentleman farmers; and a class of degraded helots, little superior to the cattle they tended, — these were your farm-servants. And for two such extreme classes — necessary result of such a state of thing — had this unfortunate though highly eulogized district parted with a moral, intelligent, high-minded peasantry, — the true boast and true riches of their country.”

“I have, I think, observed something like what you describe,” I said.

“I give,” he replied, “but one instance of a thousand. But mark how the sun’s lower disk has just reached the line of the horizon, and how the long level rule of light stretches to the very innermost recess of the cave. It darkens as the orb sinks. And see how the gauze-like