

some extent confirm Mr. Tyrer's surprising statement with regard to adulterations.

There is little doubt that the thing which most needs to be preached to this generation of Americans, by ministers of the gospel, by both clerical and lay instructors of the youth, by all who have public influence or private authority, is—a sense of honor! It must be shown and insisted upon that every position in life where one person is employed by another to do a certain work, imposes an obligation to fulfill the duties of the place with an honorable and disinterested regard for the interests of the employer. It must be shown that this view of employment applies to the cook, the errand-boy, the cashier, the legislator, the Governor, the President. This is a trite, and apparently simple, and perhaps somewhat stupid view of the opportunities of a "smart" and ambitious young American of our day; but unless this commonplace view of responsibility is laid hold of by increasing numbers in the future of our country, we will not say that our society will go to pieces, but we will say that our calamities will increase, and that we will get into troubles, and not soon out of them, compared with which the dangers and distresses of the past will seem almost insignificant.

#### Economic Mistakes of the Poor.

ONE of the chief hindrances to the prosperity of the poor and to the improvement of their condition is their ignorance of economic matters and the mistakes they often make in them. We do not refer so much to economic laws and theories as to the practical conduct of life in its economic aspects, a matter in which theoretical knowledge is of subordinate importance. It is not to be expected that men so imperfectly educated as are the laboring masses, and with so little leisure and spare energy as they have, should be able to give much study to the laws of wealth; but there is no reason why they should not manage their own business affairs with more prudence than some of them now show. Want of skill and prudence in making purchases, and mistakes in regard to wages, are common among them, and have a tendency to prolong and intensify their poverty.

Every man in a civilized community is obliged to trade, to exchange his goods and services for those of others; since every man can produce but a small part of what he needs. It is important, therefore, for everybody to make such exchanges wisely, so as to purchase what he wants at the smallest cost, and sell his own services to the best advantage. Exceptional skill in this direction is the special qualification of the successful business man, and those who are lacking in such skill are sure to be less prosperous than their neighbors. Moreover, such skill and prudence are specially important for the poor; for though a rich man may continue prosperous notwithstanding blunders and losses, a man born to poverty can seldom rise to a better condition without care and wisdom in the management of his affairs.

Now, the mistakes of the poor in practical economy are frequent and of various kinds; and, first, in making their purchases. Their means are so small that they can ill afford to spend even a portion of them imprudently; and yet they very often do so. They are

apt, for instance, to purchase goods in very small quantities, when they could buy in larger amounts at a reduced rate. Some things, of course, must necessarily be purchased in small quantities, because they will not keep well; but many of the things that a man requires for his table or for other purposes can just as well be bought in larger amounts, and if so bought they can usually be got at a considerable reduction in price. Again, the poor are too much in the habit of buying goods on trust, when exertion and forethought would enable them to buy for cash, and make a further saving in that way. Moreover, their want of knowledge of commercial affairs and inattention to the course of prices prevent them from taking advantage of the state of the market, as they might sometimes do, so as to buy what they need at the lowest price. It may be said that the mass of the poor have not the means to buy in large quantities, or to buy always for cash and to take advantage of the fluctuations in price; and to a certain extent this is true. Yet it would be easy, in most cases, for them to get together a sufficient sum to make a beginning in these matters, and, once begun, the practice could more easily be continued. Many of them, indeed, are already alive to the advantages that may thus be gained, and are shrewd and economical in all their purchases; but many others are either ignorant or heedless of such things, and thus miss the opportunity of making many a small saving.

Besides these mistakes of a strictly economical character, there are others of a different kind into which the poor are apt to fall in the use of their means, though not the poor alone. One of them is the purchase of inferior goods, or shabby imitations, when a genuine article, even of a lower grade, would be more satisfactory, as well as cheaper. Then, large sums in the aggregate are spent for articles of ornament that are not ornamental, and for vulgar amusements and other things of little or no real value. We might allude, also, to the vast sums that are wasted on liquors and other things that are positively injurious; but all these habits and practices are rather to be condemned from a moral and æsthetic point of view than from the purely economical, bad as their economical effects undoubtedly are. Besides, it is not the poor alone who are guilty or imprudent in these matters, but other classes as well; and, so far as they concern the poor, we have spoken of them in these pages before.

Such are some of the economical mistakes of the poor in the employment of their means; but those of them that work for hire, who are the great majority, make mistakes of another kind on the subject of wages. Every friend of humanity must wish that the earnings of the poor might be increased; but the means they often employ to effect such an increase seem little likely to attain their object. We are not now concerned with the general policy of strikes and trades-unions, nor with the question of their justification from a moral point of view. But we would call attention to the lack of economic knowledge and the mistakes in economic policy which their leaders so abundantly display. One would think that if men were going to seek an increase of wages, they would take care to do it when the condition of the market was favorable to the success of their attempt. Yet nothing is more common than for the managers of a trades-union to order a strike when trade is dull, the

price of goods falling, and the market, perhaps, filled with unemployed labor. Under such circumstances the attempt to raise wages is necessarily a failure; while, if proper care were used to take advantage of the market, an increase of pay might often be obtained without any struggle at all.

But there is a further mistake into which laborers are apt to fall on this subject of wages: they often entertain extravagant ideas as to the extent to which wages can be raised. One would think from the talk in which some of them indulge, and from the reckless manner in which they order strikes, that they thought almost any rate could be obtained if sufficient pressure were brought to bear. Yet a little attention to the conditions of business, to commercial history, and to the state of the market at a given time, would show that any great and sudden increase of wages was out of the question. Such increase as is possible will result in part from the general moral and intellectual improvement of the laborer himself, and of his special skill as a workman, and in part from taking advantage of the various markets and of the times and seasons, so as to get the highest rate obtainable in each particular case.

Besides the mistakes above mentioned, to which the mass of the poor are liable, there are others, to which those of their number are exposed who attempt to do business on their own account. Men born in narrow circumstances have seldom much chance in early life to learn the management of business; and they need, therefore, to be specially careful in undertaking it. Yet they are very apt to enter upon it without sufficient attention to its conditions, and without the amount of capital which the business requires. Every year a multitude of small capitalists are thus wrecked; and in the majority of cases their failure is due to mistakes and imprudences which a little more care and forethought might have prevented. Doubtless one cause of such failures is the passion for great and sudden gains; a passion that afflicts multitudes in our time, and has caused the ruin of many rich men no less than of many poor. But whatever may be the cause of failure in any particular case, the result is much to be regretted, since an increase in the number of small capitalists is greatly to be desired.

Without touching here upon the subject of coöperative industry, or the means which the rich may devise for improving the condition of the poor, we have merely tried to state briefly some of the more serious economic mistakes into which poor men and those of small means are liable to fall, and which are a hindrance, and sometimes a great one, to the improvement of their lot. If, now, we are asked what remedy can be applied, we fear there is none except the slow working of time and education. For the purchase of goods by the poor, it has been proposed that coöperative stores should be established, so as to save for the purchasers the profit they now pay to the retail dealer. That such stores, when well conducted, are highly beneficial, there can be no doubt; but for some reason or other most enterprises of this sort in America have proved unsuccessful. On the subject of wages our native American laborers have not, as a rule, been so widely mistaken as foreign laborers and those of foreign birth; and experience will in time, no doubt, lead to more correct views and wiser methods. The

general education of the poor, bringing with it more thoughtfulness and foresight, must also in the course of time lead to greater knowledge of economic subjects and better methods of management. But something also may be done by direct advice and exhortation.

#### A Ready-made Foreign Market for American Goods.

THE recent political canvass was prolific of wide differences of opinion; but we believe there is one point upon which most men of all parties are now substantially agreed, viz., the desirability of securing additional foreign markets for American goods. Many think this can best be obtained by a reduction of duties which now operate against the freedom of commerce; while others advocate the establishment by public subsidy of ocean lines, or the conversion into business agencies of our entire consular service. A commission of investigation has been appointed to visit the countries of Central and South America with a view to the extension of our trade in those quarters, and legislation of some sort may be expected to grow out of this mission. That, in a large number of cases, our manufactories are abundantly able to put out more goods than they can dispose of is disclosed by the failures from overproduction, the reduction of wages, and the ruinous competition for the home market, which are matters of daily record in the newspapers. A considerable addition to the present area of sale for American goods would in all probability not only relieve the present stringency in trade, but would put many of our manufactories upon a favorable basis for years to come.

Whatever of trade we may hereafter acquire in new markets will be based upon a demonstrated demand for our products — a demand which can only be created in the laborious course of business. In other words, the market will have to be "worked up" in strict competition with the products of other countries. Agencies must be established, samples must be shown, advertised, and tested, and patents and trade-marks secured. These labors performed, there is no lack of assurance that those who shall thus extend our material civilization will be fully protected in obtaining the legitimate profits of their labor. The agent, the owner, and the inventor will each find new rewards and a new stimulus.

There is, however, one American business which, by the neglect of Congress, has been refused the security of its legitimate profits in foreign countries. Moreover, the demand for its products is already so well established and so extensive that the industry has for years given employment to a large body of smugglers, chiefly in England, who, by underselling the market with stolen goods, have grown rich by the labors of our producers, lessening the rewards not only of these, but of those capitalists in our own country by whom the products have been set before the world. The market is there, virtually ready-made, and waiting only for Congress to say the word to enable us to occupy it. No tariff has to be repealed, no commercial agency of consuls has to be established. Nothing remains but to secure the patent which is granted with alacrity to other forms of expressing American ideas; and this Congress could accomplish in twenty minutes. The revenue which would have accrued to America had this been done fifty years ago is incalculable, but