

**THE FUNCTION OF
LABOUR IN THE
PRODUCTION OF WEALTH**

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The Function of Labour in the Production of Wealth by Alexander Philip

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BY
ALEXANDER PHILIP
LL.B., EDIN.

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N O T E.

As the following pages were in the press, there has appeared in the current number of the 'Nineteenth Century' an article by Professor Huxley, entitled "Capital—the Mother of Labour," which contains an interesting argument in support of the proposition that the essential constituent of wealth is potential energy.

BRECHIN, *March* 1890.

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I.

THE extension of comparative science has been a principal source of the progress of knowledge within recent times, and if carefully carried out, it is undoubtedly capable of still wider development. One simple and very necessary precaution is to make sure that the subject to which the results of comparative investigations are applied is in the two cases truly the same in fact as well as in name. It is easy to imagine and then expatiate upon the analogies of

the natural and the spiritual or moral worlds: it is desirable not to forget that an analogy is illustrative rather than demonstrative, and that what seems new or striking to one generation of thinkers may appear common or unobvious to the next. In attempting to apply the comparative method to certain principles which underlie the science of political economy and the law of property, we shall endeavour to keep these considerations in view.

It is, we believe, very generally acknowledged that to some such applications we must look for any prospects of genuine advance at present in the moral and still more in the social sciences. This involves no surrender to materialism, no failure to recognise the distinct sphere dominated by moral phenomena; rather the reality of such a distinct moral element will be the more clearly and more fully seen when it is most thoroughly eliminated, and when in such mixed sciences as political economy the physical or material element is definitely ascertained, and