

**CAPITAL AND LABOUR;
INCLUDING THE
RESULTS OF MACHINERY**

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Capital and labour; including the results of machinery by Charles Knight

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CHARLES KNIGHT

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THE RESULTS OF MACHINERY.

BY CHARLES KNIGHT.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

“ THE Results of Machinery ” was written by me at a period of great national alarm, when a blind rage against a power supposed to interfere with the claims of Labour was generally prevalent, and led, in the Southern agricultural districts especially, to many acts of daring violence. That little book had a most extensive sale, and is still in constant demand. Fifty thousand copies have been sold since its first publication. Within a year after that publication I wrote a second tract, “ Capital and Labour,” which was to form part of a Series entitled “ The Rights of Industry.” This Series I never could find leisure to proceed with. It has appeared to me that the two parts might be advantageously incorporated. Machinery, in connexion with Capital and Labour, is one of the great instruments of Production. In this Volume, then,

thus remodelled, the general subject of THE PRODUCTION OF WEALTH is fully, though popularly expounded. The original Tracts were especially addressed to *Working Men*. This Volume is addressed to *all*. The Statistical details are brought up to the present time.

CHARLES KNIGHT.

September 20, 1845.

CAPITAL AND LABOUR.

CHAPTER I.

LET us suppose a man brought up in civilized life, cast upon a desert land—without food, without clothes, without fire, without tools. We see the human being in the very lowest state of helplessness. Most of the knowledge he had acquired would be worse than useless; for it would not be applicable in any way to his new position. Let the land upon which he is thrown produce spontaneous fruits—let it be free from ferocious animals—let the climate be most genial—still the man would be exceedingly powerless and wretched. The first condition of his lot, to enable him to maintain existence at all, would be that he should labour. He must labour to gather the berries from the trees—he must labour to obtain water from the rivulets—he must labour to form a garment of leaves, or of some equally accessible material, to shield his body from the sun—he must labour to render some cave or hollow tree a secure place of shelter from the dews of night. There would be no intermission of the labour necessary to provide a supply of food from hand to mouth, even in the season when wild fruits were abundant. If this labour, in the most favourable season, were interrupted for a single day, or at most for two or three days, by sickness, he would in all probability perish. But, when the autumn was past, and the wild fruits were gone, he must prolong existence like some savage tribes are reported to do—by raw fish and undressed roots.

The labour of procuring these would be infinitely greater than that of climbing trees for fruit. To catch fish without nets, and scratch up roots with naked hands, is indeed painful toil. The helplessness of this man's condition would principally be the effect of one circumstance ;—he would possess no accumulation of former labour by which his present labour might be profitably directed. *The power of labour would in his case be in its least productive state.* He would partly justify the assertion that man has the feeblest natural means of any animal ;—because he would be utterly unpossessed of those means which the reason of man has accumulated around every individual in the social state.

We asked the reader to *suppose* a civilized man in the very lowest state in which the power of labour may be exercised, because there is no record of any civilized man being for any length of time in such a state.

Ross Cox, a Hudson's Bay trader, whose adventures were given to the world about twelve years ago, was in this state for a fortnight ; and his sufferings may furnish some idea of the greater miseries of a continuance in such a powerless condition. Having fallen asleep in the woods of the north-west of America, which he had been traversing with a large party, he missed the traces of his companions. The weather being very hot, he had left nearly all his clothes with his horse when he rambled from his friends. He had nothing to defend himself against the wolves and serpents but a stick ; he had nothing of which to make his bed but long grass and rushes ; he had nothing to eat but hips and wild cherries. The man would doubtless have perished, unless he had met with some Indians, who knew better how to avail themselves of the spontaneous productions around them. But this is not an instance of the continuance of Labour in the lowest state of its power.

The few individuals, also, who have been found exposed in forests, such as Peter the Wild Boy, and the Savage of Aveyron,—who were discovered, the one about a century ago, in Germany, the other about forty years since, in France,—differed from the civilized man