

**JOHN HOPKINS'S
NOTIONS ON
POLITICAL ECONOMY**

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John Hopkins's notions on political economy by Jane Haldimand

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JANE HALDIMAND

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JOHN HOPKINS'S (64)

NOTIONS

ON

POLITICAL ECONOMY.

BY THE AUTHOR OF
"CONVERSATIONS ON CHEMISTRY,"
"POLITICAL ECONOMY," &c.

BOSTON:
ALLEN AND TICKNOR.
1833.

9.10.36 Dr. William Anderson Esq

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE miscellaneous character of the following tracts is accounted for by their having been written at different periods. Some of them were published, with the author's permission, about two years ago, by a society established in Glamorganshire for the improvement of the laboring classes. It will be obvious to the reader, that it is for that rank of life that this little work is principally intended.



THE
RICH AND THE POOR.

A FAIRY TALE.

IN the time of the Fairies, things went on no better than they do at present. John Hopkins, a poor laborer, who had a large family of children to support upon very scanty wages, applied to a Fairy for assistance. "Here am I half starving," said he, "while my landlord rides about in a fine carriage; his children are pampered with the most dainty fare, and even his servants are bedizened with gaudy liveries: in a word, rich men by their extravagance, deprive us poor men of bread. In order to gratify *them* with luxuries, *we* are debarred almost the necessaries of life." — "Tis a pitiable case, honest friend," replied the Fairy, "and I am ready to do all in my power to assist you and your distressed friends. Shall I, by a stroke of my wand, destroy all the handsome equipages, fine clothes and dainty dishes, which offend

you?" — "Since you are so very obliging," said honest John, in the joy of his heart, "it would perhaps be better to destroy all luxuries whatever: for, if you confine yourself to those you mention, the rich would soon have recourse to others; and it will scarcely cost you more than an additional stroke of your wand to do the business outright, and get rid of the evil root and branch."

No sooner said than done. The good-natured Fairy waved her all-powerful wand, and, wonderful to behold! the superb mansion of the landlord shrunk beneath its stroke, and was reduced to an humble thatched cottage. The gay colors and delicate textures of the apparel of its inhabitants faded and thickened, and were transformed into the most ordinary clothing; the green-house plants sprouted out cabbages, and the pinery produced potatoes. A similar change took place in the stables and coach-house; the elegant landau was seen varying in form, and enlarging in dimensions, till it became a wagon; while the smart gig shrunk and thickened into a plough. The manes of the horses grew coarse and shaggy, their coats lost all brilliancy and softness, and their legs became thick and clumsy: in a word, they were adapted to the new vehicles they were henceforward to draw.

Honest John was profuse in his thanks, but the Fairy stopped him short. "Return to me at the end of the week," said she; "it will be time enough for you to express your gratitude when you can judge how much reason you have to be obliged to me."

Delighted with his success, and eager to communicate the happy tidings to his wife and family, John returned home. "I shall no longer," said he to himself, "be disgusted with the contrast of the rich and the poor: what *they* lose must be our gain, and we shall see whether things will not now go on in a different manner." His wife however did not receive him with equal satisfaction; for, on having gone to dress herself (it being Sunday) in her best cotton gown, she beheld it changed to a homely stuff; and her China tea-pot, given her by her landlord's wife, and on which she set no small store, though the handle was broken, was converted into crockery ware!

She came with a woful countenance to communicate these sad tidings to her husband. John hemmed and hawed, and at length wisely determined to keep his own counsel, instead of boasting of being the author of the changes which had taken place. Presently his little boy came in crying. "What ails you, Tommy?" said the father, half pettishly and somewhat suspecting

that he might have caused his tears also. "Why, daddy," replied the urchin, "as I was playing at battledore with Dick, the shuttlecock flew away and was lost, and the battledores turned into two dry sticks, good for nothing but to be burnt." "Psha!" cried the father, who was beginning to doubt whether he had not done a foolish thing. In order to take time to turn over the subject in his mind, and console himself for his disappointment, he called for his pipe. The good wife ran to fetch it, when lo and behold! the pipes were all dissolved! there was pipe-clay in plenty, but no means of smoking. Poor John could not refrain from an oath, and, in order to pacify him, his wife kindly offered him a pinch of snuff. He took the box: it felt light, and his mind misgave him as he tapped it. It was with too much cause; for, on opening it, he found it empty! At length, being alone, he gave vent to his vexation and disappointment. "I was a fool," cried he, "not to desire the Fairy to meddle with the luxuries of the rich only. God knows, we have so few, that it is very hard we should be deprived of them. I will return to her at the end of the week, and beg her to make an exception in our favor." This thought consoled for a while; but, long before the end of the week, poor John had abundance of cause to repent of all he had done. His brother Richard, who was engaged in

a silk manufactory, was, with all the other weavers, turned out of work. The silk had disappeared; the manufacturers, with ruin staring them in the face, had sent their workmen out upon the wide world. Poor John, conscience-struck, received his starving brother into his house. "You will see great changes for the better soon," said he, "and get plenty of work." — "Where and how?" cried Richard. But that was more than John would say.

Soon after, Jack, his eldest son, returned home from the coachmaker with whom he worked; all the carriages being changed into wagons, carts, and ploughs. "But why not remain with your master, and work at the carts instead of the coaches?" said his father. — "Nay, but he would not keep me, he had no work for me; he had more carts and wagons than he could dispose of for many a day: the farmers, he said, had more than they wanted, and the cartwright business was at an end, as well as coachmaking."

John sighed; indeed, he well-nigh groaned with compunction. "It is, however, fortunate for me," said he, "that I earn my livelihood as a laborer in the fields. Corn and hay, thank God! are not luxuries; and I, at least, shall not be thrown out of work."

In a few days, however, the landlord, on