

these days something to do with our reception in society, something to do even with our self-respect. You are, therefore, interested in the progress of every invention which, by cheapening the cost of production in these things, will add to the comforts of your families. And you are interested in the exhibition which asks for new appropriations of the natural powers in the shape of new machines, whether to induce an improved supply of raw cotton or any other material, improved methods of cleansing, packing, transition, or manufacture.

You of the iron trades in particular are directly interested in every improvement; for an obvious improvement upon a few of our staple machines, mules, or looms, to wit, would set all your idlers to work; and the greater the progress of invention, the greater will be the demand for your labour, and the higher your wages. Other trades may say, and probably do say, that the progress of invention will supersede their labour, and that they are therefore rather interested in keeping back invention than in forwarding it. We know that this feeling does prevail, and although we do not share it, we are bound to respect the feelings of the subjects of it, and to them we say, let us for argument sake suppose it true.

Let us suppose an improved machine introduced in any one trade. If it speeds production, it cheapens produce; and in an article of general consumption all the world is benefited, except some of the workers in the particular branch improved. Ought the interests of the world to be neglected on account of this derangement? Is it not wiser to seek to remedy the partial evil, without combating against the universal good? But we are only supposing the progress of invention to supersede human labour. Our belief is, that it ought only to open up new spheres of operation; for nature requires labour from us all, as the inseparable condition of health.

But is not the faculty of invention in man as natural as the flow of a river to the sea? And can you turn back the river to its source? No, but you can use it in its onward course—build a mill upon it—insert a wheel, attach your shafts and cogs, and make it your servant. The river has a mission to fulfil, which a little thought will explain; and so has the inventive faculty in man a high destiny; which, although you may not at this moment see, yet depend on it your permanent welfare is intimately connected therewith. But that destiny requires that the inventive faculty be developed to its full extent; and every spark of genius called forth by the promoters of the exhibition, every improvement consequent on the examination by inventive men of the articles exhibited, will aid that great purpose in which all men should be united—mutual good.

We do not mean to deny that the introduction of improvements causes derangements and passing troubles, but we also believe that these derangements will lead to the adoption of means to prevent a continuance of the evils thereby engendered; and we are quite positive that if these troubles induce reflection and economy amongst working men, they will by these means establish a permanent good.

It is probable that the best specimens of manufacturing ingenuity and the most finished machines will be exhibited by large firms; but we hope that the makers of the machines who know what effect every part is intended to have, and who alone are capable of discovering all their deficiencies, will be most fruitful of new designs, and bear away the palm for proposed improvements. And we shall hope to see many working men, whose livelihoods are now earned by a monotonous occupation not suited to their most active sympathies, exhibiting the results of their native genius, and by the exposure of their designs meeting with parties who will lift them into their proper element, so that the prominent faculties shall have full play and society gain to the fullest extent.