

Marx Hardy Machiavelli Joyce Austen  
Defoe Abbot Melville Montaigne Cooper Emerson Hugo  
Stoker Wilde Christie Maupassant Haggard Chesterton Molière Eliot Grimm  
Garnett Engels Schiller Byron Maupassant Schiller  
Goethe Hawthorne Smith Kafka  
Cotton Dostoyevsky Dostoyevsky Smith Willis  
Baum Henry Kipling Doyle Henry Willis  
Leslie Dumas Flaubert Nietzsche Turgenev Balzac  
Stockton Vatsyayana Crane  
Burroughs Verne  
Curtis Tocqueville Gogol Vinci  
Homer Tolstoy Whitman Gogol Busch  
Darwin Thoreau Twain Plato Scott  
Potter Freud Zola Lawrence Dickens Harte  
Kant Jowett Stevenson Burton Hesse  
Andersen London Descartes Cervantes Voltaire Cooke  
Poe Aristotle Wells Shakespeare  
Hale James Hastings Shakespeare Cooke  
Bunner Shakespeare Shakespeare Irving  
Richter Chambers Irving  
Doré Chekhov da Shakespeare Alcott  
Swift Dante Shaw Wodehouse  
Pushkin Newton



tredition was established in 2006 by Sandra Latusseck and Soenke Schulz. Based in Hamburg, Germany, tredition offers publishing solutions to authors and publishing houses, combined with worldwide distribution of printed and digital book content. tredition is uniquely positioned to enable authors and publishing houses to create books on their own terms and without conventional manufacturing risks.

For more information please visit: [www.tredition.com](http://www.tredition.com)

## TREDITION CLASSICS

This book is part of the TREDITION CLASSICS series. The creators of this series are united by passion for literature and driven by the intention of making all public domain books available in printed format again - worldwide. Most TREDITION CLASSICS titles have been out of print and off the bookstore shelves for decades. At tredition we believe that a great book never goes out of style and that its value is eternal. Several mostly non-profit literature projects provide content to tredition. To support their good work, tredition donates a portion of the proceeds from each sold copy. As a reader of a TREDITION CLASSICS book, you support our mission to save many of the amazing works of world literature from oblivion. See all available books at [www.tredition.com](http://www.tredition.com).



The content for this book has been graciously provided by Project Gutenberg. Project Gutenberg is a non-profit organization founded by Michael Hart in 1971 at the University of Illinois. The mission of Project Gutenberg is simple: To encourage the creation and distribution of eBooks. Project Gutenberg is the first and largest collection of public domain eBooks.

**The Claims of Labour an essay on  
the duties of the employers to the  
employed**

Arthur, Sir Helps

# Imprint

This book is part of TREDITION CLASSICS

Author: Arthur, Sir Helps  
Cover design: Buchgut, Berlin - Germany

Publisher: tredition GmbH, Hamburg - Germany  
ISBN: 978-3-8472-1751-0

[www.tredition.com](http://www.tredition.com)  
[www.tredition.de](http://www.tredition.de)

Copyright:  
The content of this book is sourced from the public domain.

The intention of the TREDITION CLASSICS series is to make world literature in the public domain available in printed format. Literary enthusiasts and organizations, such as Project Gutenberg, worldwide have scanned and digitally edited the original texts. tredition has subsequently formatted and redesigned the content into a modern reading layout. Therefore, we cannot guarantee the exact reproduction of the original format of a particular historic edition. Please also note that no modifications have been made to the spelling, therefore it may differ from the orthography used today.

# The Claims of Labour.

AN ESSAY ON THE  
DUTIES OF THE EMPLOYERS  
TO THE EMPLOYED.

The Second Edition.

to which is added,  
an essay on the means of improving the health  
and increasing the comfort of the  
labouring classes.



LONDON  
WILLIAM PICKERING  
1845.

p. ii"“There is formed in every thing a double nature of good; the one, as every thing is a total or substantive in itself; the other, as it is a part or member of a greater body; whereof the latter is in degree the greater and the worthier, because it tendeth to the conservation of a more general form. Therefore we see the iron in particular sympathy moveth to the loadstone; but yet if it exceed a certain quantity, it forsaketh the affection to the loadstone, and like a good patriot moveth to the earth, which is the region and country of massy bodies. This double nature of good, and the comparative thereof, is much more engraven upon man, if he degenerate not; unto whom the conservation of duty to the public ought to be much more precious than the conservation of life and being; according to that memorable speech of Pompeius Magnus, when being in commission of purveyance for a famine at Rome, and being dissuaded with great vehemency and instance by his friends about him, that he should not hazard himself to sea in an extremity of weather, he said only to them, ‘Necesse est ut eam, non ut vivam.’ But it may be truly affirmed that there was never any philosophy, religion, or other discipline, which did so plainly and highly exalt the good which is communicative, and depress the good which is private and particular, as the Holy Faith; well declaring, that it was the same God that gave the Christian law to men, who gave those laws of nature to inanimate creatures that we spoke of before.”

*Bacon's Advancement of Learning.*

“And well may masters consider how easie a transposition it had been for God, to have made him to mount into the saddle that holds the stirrup; and him to sit down at the table, who stands by with a trencher.”

*Fuller's Holy State.*



p. iii TO HENRY TAYLOR, ESQ.

My dear Taylor,

I have great pleasure in dedicating this book to you, as I know of no one who, both in his life and writings, has shown a more profound and delicate care for the duties of the Employer to the Employed. Pardon me, if following the practice of the world, I see the author in his hero, and think I hear you speaking, when Van Arvelde exclaims—

“A serviceable, faithful, thoughtful friend,  
Is old Van Ryk, and of a humble nature,  
And yet with faculties and gifts of sense,  
Which place him justly on no lowly level—  
Why should I say a lowlier than my own,  
Or otherwise than as an equal use him?  
That with familiarity respect  
Doth slacken, is a word of common use.  
I never found it so.”

p. iv I have had some peculiar advantages in writing upon this subject. I should have been unobservant indeed, if, with such masters as I have served under, I had not learnt something, in regard to the duties of a great employer of labour, from witnessing their ever-flowing courtesy; their care for those who came within their sphere; their anxiety, as the heads of departments, to recognize every exertion on the part of their subordinates; and their ready sympathy with the poor and the friendless, a sympathy which the vexations and harassments of office, and all those things that tend to turn a man's thoughts in upon himself, could never subdue.

But, happily, it is not only amongst the high in office that such examples are to be found. The spirit, and even some of the very modes of benevolent exertion which I have endeavoured to recommend, have already been carried into practice, and I trust may be frequently seen, in the conduct towards their dependents, both of manufacturers and landed proprietors.

I must also say how much I owe to the excellent p. v Reports which of late years have been presented to Parliament on subjects

connected with the welfare of the labouring classes. It is to be regretted that these reports are not better known. I have made frequent use of them, and hope that the quotations I have given may induce my readers to turn to the original sources.

With regard to the subject generally, it appears to me that knowledge of the duties of an employer is every day becoming more important. The tendency of modern society is to draw the family circle within narrower and narrower limits. Those amusements which used to be shared by all classes are becoming less frequent: the great lord has put away his crowd of retainers: the farmer, in most cases, does not live with his labouring men: and the master has less sympathy and social intercourse with his domestics. If this be so, if the family circle is thus becoming narrower, the conduct of those in domestic authority, having a more intense influence, has the more need of being regulated by the highest sense of duty: and, with respect to society in general, if the old bonds are p. viloosened, other ties must be fostered in their place.

You will not be likely to mistake my meaning, and to suppose that I look back with any fond regret at the departure of the feudal system, or that I should wish to bring the present generation under its influence. Mankind does not so retrace its steps. But still, though the course of our race is onwards, the nature of man does not change. There is the same need for protection and countenance on the one side, and for reverence and attachment on the other, that there ever has been; and the fact that society is in many respects more disconnected than it used to be, renders it the more necessary to cultivate in the most watchful manner every mode of strengthening the social intercourse between rich and poor, between master and servant, between the employers and the employed, in whatever rank they may be.

I am afraid it may be said with justice, that both this letter and the following Essay are "*sermoni propiora*," according to Charles Lamb's translation, "*properer for a sermon*:" but it is impossible to dwell long on any such p. viisubject as the one which I have chosen, without having to appeal to the best motives of human endeavour; and the shortest way even to the good which is of a purely physical

character lies often, I believe, through the highest moral considerations.

Believe me,  
My dear Taylor,  
Most truly yours,  
The Author.

London, July 1, 1844.



## p. 1THE CLAIMS OF LABOUR.

### CHAPTER I.

#### Masters and Men.

It is a thing so common, as almost to be ridiculous, for a man to express self-distrust at the commencement of any attempt in speech or writing. And yet, trite as this mode of beginning is, its appropriateness makes each one use it as heartily as if it were new and true for him, though it might have been a common-place for others. When he glances hurriedly across the wide extent of his subject, when he feels how inadequate his expression will be even to his conception, and, at the same time, has a yearning desire to bring his audience into the same mind with himself, it is no wonder if he begins with a few, hesitating, oft repeated, words about his p. 2own insufficiency compared with the greatness of his subject.

Happily, I have not occasion to dwell much upon the importance of the subject to which I am anxious to engage attention. For a long time it has been gradually emerging from the darkness in which it had been left. The claims of labour and the rights of the humble and the poor have necessarily gained more of the attention of mankind, as Christianity has developed itself. That power was sure, in its gradual encroachments upon the evil nature of man, to make its voice heard in this matter. It is a voice which may come out of strange bodies, such as systems of ethics, or of politics; but men may call it what they please, it goes on doing its appointed work, "conquering and to conquer."

Persons of a thoughtful mind seeing closely the falsehood, the folly, and the arrogance, of the age in which they live, are apt, occasionally, to have a great contempt for it: and I doubt not that many a man looks upon the present time as one of feebleness and degeneracy. There are, however, signs of an p. 3increased solicitude for the claims of labour, which of itself is a thing of the highest promise, and more to be rejoiced over than all the mechanical triumphs which both those who would magnify, and those who would depreciate, the present age, would be apt to point to as containing its especial significance and merit.

But what do all these mechanical triumphs come to? It is in vain that you have learned to move with double or treble the velocity of your immediate predecessors: it is in vain that you can show new modes of luxury, or new resources in art. The inquiring historian will give these things their weight, but will, nevertheless, persevere in asking how the great mass of the people were fed, and clothed, and taught: and whether the improvement in their condition corresponded at all with the improvement of the condition of the middle and upper classes. What a sorry answer any one, replying for this age, would have to give him. Nor would it be enough, indeed, if we could make a satisfactory reply to his questions about the physical state of the people. We ought to be able to say p. 4that the different orders of society were bound together by links of gratitude and regard: that they were not like layers of various coloured sand, but that they formed one solid whole of masonry, each part having its relation of use and beauty to all the others.

Certainly, if we look at the matter, we have not much to say for ourselves, unless it be in that dawning of good intentions which I have alluded to before. There is to be found in our metropolis, in our great towns, and even in our rural districts, an extent of squalid misery such as we are almost afraid to give heed to, and which we are glad to forget as soon as we have read or heard of it. It may be that our ancestors endured, it may be that many savage tribes still endure, far more privation than is to be found in the sufferings of our lowest class. But the mind refuses to consider the two states as analogous, and insists upon thinking that the state of physical and moral degradation often found amongst our working classes, with the arabesque of splendour and luxury which surrounds it, is a more shocking thing to contemplate than a pressing scarcity of provisions p. 5endured by a wandering horde of savage men sunk in equal barbarism. When we follow men home, who have been cooperating with other civilized men in continuous labour throughout the livelong day, we should not, without experience, expect to find their homes dreary, comfortless, deformed with filth, such homes as poverty alone could not make. Still less, when we gaze upon some pleasant looking village, fair enough in outward seeming for poets' songs to celebrate, should we expect to find scarcity of fuel, scantiness of food, prevalence of fever, the healthy huddled together with

the sick, decency outraged, and self-respect all gone. And yet such sights, both in town and country, if not of habitual occurrence, are at any rate sadly too numerous for us to pass them by as rare and exceptional cases.

Is this then the inevitable nature of things? Has the boasted civilization of the world led only to this? Do we master the powers of nature only to let forth a new and fierce torrent of social miseries upon us? Let not such thoughts be ours. Pagans, the slaves of destiny, might well have held them. But p. 6we cannot doubt that the conditions of labour, under which man holds the earth, express the mercy and the goodness, no less than the judgment, of God.

Many benevolent persons feel, doubtless, very sensitively for the sad condition of the labouring classes, and are anxiously looking about for remedies to meet it. I would not speak slightly of any attempt in that direction. There are problems in political economy, in government, and, perhaps, even in the adaptation of machinery, which may be worked out with signal service to the great cause of suffering humanity. It is not my intention, however, to dwell upon such topics. My object is to show what can be done with the means that are at the present moment in every body's power. Many a man, who is looking about for some specific, has in his hands the immediate means of doing great good, which he would be ready enough to employ, if he had but imagination to perceive that he possessed them. My endeavour then will simply be to show what can be p. 7done by the employers of labour in their individual and private capacity.

What an important relation is that of Master and Man! How it pervades the world; ascending from the lowest gradation of planter and slave through the states of master and servant, landlord and labourer, manufacturer and artisan, till it comes to the higher degrees of rule which one cultivated man has to exercise over another in the performance of the greatest functions. See, throughout, what difficulties and temptations encumber this relation. How boundless is the field of thought which it opens to us, how infinite the duties which it contains, how complete an exercise it is for the whole faculties of man. Observe what wretchedness is caused by a misunderstanding of this relation in domestic matters. See the selfish care-

lessness about the happiness of those around them of men not ill-intentioned, nor unkind, perhaps, in their dealings with the world in general, but lamentably unfit for the management of a home. Then observe the effects of similar p. 8 mismanagement in dealing with a country. Look at the listless loiterers about an Irish town: you would naturally say to yourself, "Surely this people have done all that there can be for them to do." You walk out of the town, and find the adjacent fields as listless-looking, and neglected, as the men themselves. Think what a want there must be of masters of labour, that those hands and these weeds are not brought into closer contact.

It may be said that the distressed condition of the labouring classes is owing to temporary causes, and that good times, by which is meant good wages, would remove a large part of the evil. I confess it does not appear to me that a good harvest or two, or ready customers on the other side of the Atlantic, or the home demand that may arise from exhausted stocks, or any other cause of that nature which is simply to end in better wages, would of itself do all, or even any considerable part, of what we should desire. I do not, for a moment, mean to depreciate the good effects that would flow from an increase of p. 9 employment and better wages. But still I imagine that there are many cases in which, if you were, in ordinary times, to double the amount of wages, a very inadequate proportion of good would follow. You have to teach these poor people how to spend money: you have to give them the opportunities of doing so to advantage: you have to provide a system of education which shall not vary with every fluctuation of trade: and to adopt such methods of working as shall make the least possible disturbance of domestic ties. No sudden influx of money will do all these things. In fact, whatever part of this subject one takes up, one is perpetually brought back to the conviction of the necessity which exists for an earnest and practical application, on the part of the employing class, of thought and labour for the welfare of those whom they employ.

Some of my readers may think that I have spoken of the distress of the labouring population in exaggerated terms. Let them only read the details of it in the Report of 1842, on the Sanitary Condition of the labouring p. 10 population, or in the Report of last year, on the condition of the children and young persons employed in mines

and manufactures. I scarcely know what extracts to give of these direful reports, that may briefly convey the state of things to those who have not studied the subject. Shall I tell them of children ignorant who Jesus Christ was; or of others who know no more of the Lord's Prayer than the first words, "Our Father:" and whose nightly prayers begin and end with those two words? Shall I tell them of great towns in which one half at least of the juvenile population is growing up without education of any kind whatever? Shall I show that working people are often permitted to pass their labour time, the half of their lives, in mines, workshops, and manufactories, where an atmosphere of a deleterious kind prevails: and this, too, not from any invincible evil in the nature of the employment, but from a careless or penurious neglect on the part of their employers? Shall I go into a lengthened description of the habitations of the poor which will show that they are often worse housed than beasts of burden? Or p. 11 need I depict at large the dark stream of profligacy which overflows and burns into those parts of the land where such Want and Ignorance prevail?

How many of these evils might have been mitigated, if not fully removed, had each generation of masters done but a small part of its duty in the way of amelioration. But it was not of such things that they were thinking. The thoughtless cruelty in the world almost outweighs the rest.

"Why vex me with these things?" exclaims the general reader. "Have we not enough of dismal stories? It oppresses us to hear them. Let us hope that something will occur to prevent such things in future. But I am not a redresser of grievances. Let those who live by the manufacturing system cure the evils incident to it. Oh that there had never been such a thing as a manufacturing system!" With thoughts vague, recriminatory, and despondent, as the foregoing, does many a man push from him all consideration on the subject. It is so easy to despair: and the largeness of a calamity is so ready a shelter for those who p. 12 have not heart enough to adventure any opposition to it.

Thus, by dwelling upon the magnitude of the evils we long to lessen, we are frightened and soothed into letting our benevolent wishes remain as wishes only. But surely a man may find a sphere

small enough, as well as large enough, for him to act in. In all other pursuits, we are obliged to limit the number and extent of our objects, in order to give full effect to our endeavours: and so it should be with benevolence. The foolish sluggard stares hopelessly into the intricacies of the forest, and thinks that it can never be reclaimed. The wiser man, the labourer, begins at his corner of the wood, and makes out a task for himself for each day. Let not our imaginations be employed on one side only. Think, that large as may appear the work to be done—so too the result of any endeavour, however small in itself, may be of infinite extent in the future. Nothing is lost.

And why should we despair? A great nation is never in extreme peril until it has lost its hopeful spirit. If, at this moment, a p. 13 foreign enemy were on the point of invading us, how strenuous we should be: what moral energy would instantly pervade us. Faster than the beacon lights could give the intelligence from headland to headland; from city to city would spread the national enthusiasm of a people that would never admit the thought of being conquered. Trust me, these domestic evils are foes not less worthy of our attention than any foreign invaders. It seems to me, I must confess, a thing far more to be dreaded, that any considerable part of our population should be growing up in a state of absolute ignorance, than would be the danger, not new to us, of the combined hostility of the civilized world. Our trials, as a nation, like our individual ones, are perpetually varied as the world progresses.

“The old order changeth, yielding place to new,  
And God fulfils himself in many ways.”

We have not the same evils to contend with as our ancestors had; but we need the same stoutness of heart that bore them through the contest. The sudden growth of things, excellent in themselves, entangles the feet of p. 14 that generation amongst whom they spring up. There may be something, too, in the progress of human affairs like the coming in of the tide, which, for each succeeding wave; often seems as much of a retreat as an advance: but still the tide comes on.

The settled state of things attendant upon peace, and an unquestioned dynasty, is good, as it enables men to look more to civil affairs; but it has, perhaps, a drawback in a certain apathy which is

wont to accompany it. The ordinary arrangements of social life, for a long time uninterrupted by any large calamity, appear to become hardened into certainties. A similar course of argument would, on a large scale, apply not only to this country, but to the world in general. Security is the chief end of civilization, and as it progresses, the fortunes of individuals are, upon the whole, made less liable to derangement. This very security may tend to make men careless of the welfare of others, and, as Bacon would express it, may be noted as an impediment to benevolence. I have often thought, whether in former times, when men p. 15 looked to those immediately around them as their body guard against sudden and violent attacks, they ventured to show as much ill-temper to those they lived with as you sometimes see them do now, when assistance of all kinds is a purchasable commodity. Considerations of this nature are particularly applicable when addressed to persons living in a great capital like London. All things that concern the nation, its joys, its sorrows, and its successes, are transacted in this metropolis; or, as one might more properly say, are represented in transactions in this metropolis. But still this often happens in such a manner as would be imperceptible even to people of vast experience and observation. The countless impulses which travel up from various directions to this absorbing centre sometimes neutralize each other, and leave a comparative calm; or they create so complex an agitation, that it may be next to impossible for us to discern and estimate the component forces. Hence the metropolis may not at times be sufficiently susceptible in the case either of manufacturing or agricultural distress, or of any colonial perturbation. This p. 16 metropolitan insensibility has some great advantages, but it is well for us to observe the corresponding evil, and, as far as may be, to guard our own hearts from being rendered apathetic by its influence.

I do not seek to terrify any one into a care for the labouring classes, by representing the danger to society of neglecting them. It is certainly a fearful thing to think of large masses of men being in that state of want and misery which leaves them nothing to hazard; and who are likely to be without the slightest reverence or love for the institutions around them. Still it is not to any fear, grounded on such considerations, that I would appeal. The flood-gates may be strong enough to keep out the torrent for our time. These things are

not in our reckonings. Occasionally the upheaving of the waves may frighten timid, selfish, men into concessions which they would not otherwise have made; but those whom I would seek to influence, are likely to court danger and difficulty rather than to shun it. Nor would I even care to disturb the purely selfish man by dwelling studiously on any social dangers around us, p. 17 or labouring to discern in present disturbance or distress the seeds of inevitable revolution. No, I would say to him, if it all ends here,

“But here, upon this bank and shoal of time,”

you may have chosen wisely. It is true, there are sources of happiness which you now know nothing of, and which may be far beyond any selfish gratification you have ever experienced. Indeed, it may be, that you cannot enjoy the highest delights without sharing them, that they are not things to be given out to each of us as individuals, now to this man, then to that, but that they require a community of love. But, at any rate, I do not wish to scare you into active and useful exertion by indicating that you are, otherwise, in danger of losing any of the good things of this world.

The great motive to appeal to, is not a man's apprehension of personal loss or suffering, but his fear of neglecting a sacred duty. And it will be found here, I believe, as elsewhere, that the highest motives are those of the most sustained efficiency.

But little as I would counsel despair, or p. 18 encourage apathy, or seek to influence by terror, it is not that I look to the “course of events,” or any other rounded collection of words, to do anything for us. What is this “course of events” but the continuity of human endeavour? And giving all due weight to the influence of those general currents which attend the progress of opinions and institutions, we must still allow largely for the effect of individual character, and individual exertions. The main direction that the stream will take is manifest enough perhaps; but it may come down upon long tracts of level ground which it will overspread quietly, or it may enter into some rocky channel which will control it; or it may meet with some ineffectual mud embankment which it will overthrow with devastation.

Putting aside then such phrases as “course of events,” and the like, let us look to men. And whom shall we look to first but the