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The Rights of Man (1793)

A Lecture

Read at the Philosophical Society in Newcastle on November 8th, 1775, for printing of which the Society did the Author the Honour to expel him

Mr President, It being my turn to lecture, I beg to give some thoughts on this important question, viz. – Whether mankind in society reap all the advantages from their natural and equal rights of property in land and liberty, which in that state they possibly may and ought to expect? And as I hope you, Mr. President and the good company here, are sincere friends to truth, I am under no apprehensions of giving offense by defending her cause with freedom.

That property in land and liberty among men in a state of nature ought to be equal, few, one would be fain to hope, would be foolish enough to deny. Therefore, taking this to be granted, the country of any people in a native state, is properly their common, in which each of them has an equal property, with free liberty to sustain himself and family with the animals, fruits and other products thereof. Thus such a people reap jointly the whole advantages of their country, or neighbourhood, without having their right in so doing called in question by any, not even by the most selfish and corrupt. For upon what must they live if not upon the productions of the country in which they reside? Surely, to deny them that right is in effect denying them a right to live. Well, methinks some are not ready to say, but is it lawful,

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reasonable and just, for this people to sell, or make a present even, of the whole of their country, or common, to whom they will, to be held by them and their heirs for ever?

To this I answer, if their posterity require no grosser materials to live and move upon than air, it would certainly be very ill-natured to dispute their right of parting, for what of their own, their posterity would never have occasions for; but if their posterity cannot live but as grossly as they do, the same gross materials must be left to them to live upon. For the right to deprive anything of the means of living, supposes a right to deprive it of life; and this right ancestors are not supposed to have over their posterity.

Hence it is plain that the land or earth, in any country or neighbourhood, with everything in or on the same, or pertaining thereto, belongs at all times to the living inhabitants of the same country or neighbourhood in an equal manner. For, as I said before, there is no living but on land and its productions, consequently, what we cannot live without we have the same property in as ourselves.

Now as society ought properly to be nothing but a mutual agreement among the inhabitants of a country to maintain the natural rights and privileges of one another against all opposers, whether foreign or domestic, it would lead one to expect to find those rights and privileges no further infringed upon among men pretending to be in that state, than necessity absolutely required. I say again, it would lead one to think so. But I am afraid whoever does will be mightily mistaken. However, as the truth here is of much importance to be known, let it be boldly fought out; in order to which it may not be improper to trace the present method of holding land among men in society from its original.

If we look back to the origin of the present nations, we shall see that the land, with all its appurtenances, was claimed by a few, and divided among themselves, in as assured a manner as if they had manufactured it and it had been the work of their own hands; and by being unquestioned, or not called to an account for such usurpations and unjust claims, they fell into a habit of thinking, or, which is the same thing to the rest of mankind, of acting as if the earth was made for

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or by them, and did not scruple to call it their own property, which they might dispose of without regard to any other living creature in the universe. Accordingly they did so; and no man, more than any other creature, could claim a right to so much as a blade of grass, or a nut or an acorn, a fish or a fowl, or any natural production whatever, though to save his life, without the permission of the pretended proprietor; and not a foot of land, water, rock or heath but was claimed by one or other of those lords; so that all things, men as well as other creatures who lived, were obliged to owe their lives to some or other's property, consequently they like the creatures were claimed, and, certainly as properly as the wood herbs, etc., that were nourished by the soil. And so we find, that whether they lived, multiplied, worked or fought, it was all for their respective lords; and they, God bless them, most graciously accepted of all as their due. For by granting the means of life, they granted the life itself; and of course, they thought they had a right to all the services and advantages that the life or death of the creatures they gave life to could yield.

Thus the title of gods seems suitable enough to such great beings; nor is it to be wondered at that no services could be thought too great by poor dependent needy wretches to such mightly and all-sufficient lords, in whom they seemed to live and move and have their being. Thus were the first land- holders usurpers and tyrants; and all who have since possessed their lands, have done so by right of inheritance, purchase, etc., from them; and the present proprietors, like their predecessors, are proud to own it; and like them, too, they exclude all others from the least pretence to their respective properties. And anyone of them still can, by laws of their own making, oblige every living creature to remove off his property (which, to the great distress of mankind, is too often put in execution); so of consequence were all the land- holders to be of one mind, and determined to take their properties into their own hands, all the rest of mankind might go to heaven if they would, for there would be no place found for them here. Thus men may not live in any part of this world, not even where they are born, but as

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strangers, and by the permission of the pretender to the property thereof; which permission is, for the most part, paid extravagantly for, though many people are so straitened to pay the present demands, that it is believed if they hold on, there will be few to grant the favour to. And those land-makers, as we shall call them, justify all this by the practice of other manufacturers, who take all they can get for the products of their hands; and because that everyone ought to live by his business as well as he can, and consequently so ought the land-makers. Now, having before supposed it both proved and allowed, that mankind have as equal and just a property in land as they have in liberty, air, or the light and heat of the sun, and having also considered upon what hard conditions they enjoy those common gifts of nature, it is plain they are far from reaping all the advantages from them which they may and ought to expect.

But lest it should be said that a system whereby they may reap more advantages consistent with the nature of society cannot be proposed, I will attempt to show the outlines of such a plan.

Let it be supposed, then, that the whole people in some country, after much reasoning and deliberation, should conclude that every man has an equal property in the land in the neighbourhood where he resides. They therefore resolve that if they live in society together, it shall only be with a view that everyone may reap all the benefits from their natural rights and privileges possible.

Therefore a day appointed on which the inhabitants of each parish meet, in their respective parishes, to take their long-lost rights into possession, and to form themselves into corporations. So then each parish becomes a corporation, and all men who are inhabitants become members or burghers. The land, with all that appertains to it, is in every parish made the property of the corporation or parish, with as ample power to let, repair, or alter all or any part thereof as a lord of the manor enjoys over his lands, houses, etc.; but the power of alienating the least morsel, in any manner, from the parish either at this or any time hereafter is denied. For it is solemnly agreed to, by the whole nation, that a parish that

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shall either sell or give away any part of its landed property, shall be looked upon with as much horror and detestation, and used by them as if they had sold all their children to be slaves, or massacred them with their own hands. Thus are there no more nor other lands in the whole country than the parishes; and each of them is sovereign lord of its own territories.

Then you may behold the rent which the people have paid into the parish treasuries, employed by each parish in paying the Government its share of the sum which the Parliament or National Congress at any time grants; in maintaining and relieving its own poor, and people out of work; in paying the necessary officers their salaries; in building, repairing, and adorning its houses, bridges, and other structures; in making and maintaining convenient and delightful streets, highways, and passages both for foot and carriages; in making and maintaining canals and other conveniences for trade and navigation; in planting and taking in waste grounds; in providing and keeping up a magazine of ammunition, and all sorts of arms sufficient for all its inhabitants in case of danger from enemies; in premiums for the encouragement of agri- culture, or anything else thought worthy of encouragement; and, in a word, in doing whatever the people think proper; and not, as formerly, to support and spread luxury , pride, and all manner of vice. As for corruption in elections, it has now no being or effect among them; all affairs to be deter- mined by voting, either in a full meeting of a parish, its committees, or in the house of representatives, are done by balloting, so that votings or elections among them occasion no animosities, for none need to let another know for which side he votes; all that can be done, therefore, in order to gain a majority of votes for anything, is to make it appear in the best light possibly by speaking or writing. Among them Government does not meddle in every trifle; but on the contrary , allows each parish the power of putting the laws in force in all cases, and does not interfere but when they act manifestly to the prejudice of society and the rights and liberties of mankind, as established in their glorious constitution and laws. For the judgment of a parish may be as

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much depended upon as that of a House of Lords, because they have as little to fear from speaking or voting according to truth as they.

A certain number of neighbouring parishes, as those in a town or county, have each an equal vote in the election of persons to represent them in Parliament, Senate, or Congress; and each of them pays equally towards their maintenance. They are chosen thus: all the candidates are proposed in every parish on the same day. when the election by balloting immediately proceeds in all the parishes at once, to prevent too great a concourse at one place; and they who are found to have a majority, on a proper survey of the several poll- books, are acknowledged to be their representatives.

A man by dwelling a whole year in any parish, becomes a parishioner or member of its corporation; and retains that privilege till he lives a full year in some other, when he becomes a member in that parish, and immediately loses all his right to the former for ever, unless he choose to go back and recover it by dwelling again a full year there. Thus none can be a member of two parishes at once, and yet a man is always member of one though he move ever so oft.

If in any parish should be dwelling strangers from foreign nations, or people from distant countries who by sickness or other casualties should become so necessitous as to require relief before they have acquired a settlement by dwelling a full year therein; then this parish, as if it were their proper settlement, immediately takes them under its humane protection, and the expenses thus incurred by any parish in providing those not properly their own poor being taken account of, is discounted by the Exchequer out of the first payment made to the State. Thus poor strangers, being the poor of the State, are not looked upon with an envious eye lest they should become burthensome, -neither are the poor harassed about in the extremity of distress, and perhaps in a dying condition, to justify the litigiousness of the parishes.

All the men in every parish, at times of their own choosing, repair together to a field for that purpose, with their officers, arms, banners, and all sorts of martial music, in order to learn or retain the complete art of war; there they become soldiers.

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Yet not to molest their neighbours unprovoked, but to be able to defend what none have a right to dispute their title to the enjoyment of; and woe be to them who occasion them to do this, they would use them worse than highwaymen or pirates if they got them in their power.

There is no army kept in pay among them in times of peace, as all have property alike to defend, they are alike ready to run to arms when their country is in danger; and when an army is to be sent abroad, it is soon raised, of ready trained soldiers, either as volunteers or by casting lots in each parish for so many men.

Besides, as each man has a vote in all the affairs of his parish, and for his own sake must wish well to the public, the land is let in very small farms, which makes employment for a greater number of hands, and makes more victualling of all kinds be raised.

There are no tolls or taxes of any kind paid among them by native or foreigner, but the aforesaid rent which every person pays to the parish, according to the quantity, quality, and conveniences of the land, housing, etc., which he occupies in it. The government, poor, roads, etc. etc., as said before, are all maintained by the parishes with the rent; on which account all wares, manufactures, allowable trade employments or actions are entirely duty free. Freedom to do anything whatever cannot there be bought; a thing is either entirely prohibited, as theft or murder; or entirely free to everyone without tax or price, and the rents are still not so high, notwithstanding all that is done with them, as they were formerly for only the maintenance of a few haughty, un- thankful landlords. For the government, which may be said to be the greatest mouth, having neither excisemen, custom- house men, collectors, army, pensioners, bribery , nor such like ruination vermin to maintain, is soon satisfied, and more- over there are no more persons employed in offices, either about the government or parishes, than are absolutely neces- sary; and their salaries are but just sufficient to maintain them suitably to their offices. And, as to the other charges, they are but trifles, and might be increased or diminished at pleasure.

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But though the rent, which includes all public burdens, were obliged to be somewhat raised, what then? All nations have a devouring landed interest to support besides those necessary expenses of the public; and they might be raised very high indeed before their burden would be as heavy as that of their neighbours, who pay rent and taxes too. And it surely would be the same for a person in any country to pay for instance an increase of rent if required, as to pay the same sum by little and little on everything he gets. It would certainly save him a great deal of trouble and inconvenience, and Government much expense.

But what makes this prospect yet more glowing is that after this empire of right and reason is thus established, it will stand for ever. Force and corruption attempting its downfall shall equally be baffled, and all other nations, struck with wonder and admiration at its happiness and stability, shall follow the example; and thus the whole earth shall at last be happy and live like brethren.

An Interesting Conversation, between
a Gentleman and the Author, on the
Subject of the foregoing Lecture

Gent. So I understand you are the Author of this strange Lecture?

Auth. Yes, Sir.

Gent. Well, though I am a friend to the Reformation of the world, I did not expect anyone's ideas would have been carried to such extravagant lengths on the subject as your's.

Auth. And I am as strangely puzzled to conceive how anyone, not afraid of the freedom of his own thoughts, could stop any thing short of the system there laid down. Gent. Indeed! But who, pray, among all the Revolutionists in either America, France, or England, or any where else, ever disputed or attempted to invalidate the rights of the landed interest? Or, does Paine, whose publications seem to satisfy the wishes of the most sanguine Reformers, glance in the least on their rights? This is taking too great liberties.

Auth. I cannot help it. I would sooner not think at all, than check my thoughts on a subject so important. -I hate patching and cobbling. Let us have a perfect system that will keep itself right, and let us have done; for what is radically wrong must be a continual plague.

But, Sir, why all this anxiety and concern for the interests of landlords? Those who can reward as they can will never want advocates to defend their cause, whether it be good or bad. "Will you plead for Baal? If Baal be a god, let him plead for himself".

The Reformers, of whom you say you are one, indulge themselves in criticising on, and condemning customs and

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establishments as old and as defensible as the monopoly of land, and think they are only using the Rights of Men: allow me therefore, to take the same liberty with what I think amiss; and let Baal, as I say, plead for himself. So, Sir, your servant, you may dislike my free manner of defending doctrines, which I think of such magnitude.

Gent. Nay, stop a little Sir, you must excuse me. I was only acting in character; you must allow Baal, as you say, to plead for himself, for I being a landlord cannot be expected to lose an estate without some defence; therefore, indulge me with the solution of such difficulties as appear to me in the principles and execution of your plan, that if I am a loser I may be satisfied that the public good absolutely requires it.

You build your system, I observe, on the supposition that men have the same right to property of land as they have to liberty, and the light and heat of the sun, which I grant is a very just position, respecting men in a natural, or in their primeval state; but this antient and universal right is so set aside and disused, that it seems quite forgot and expunged from the catalogue of the Rights of Men; besides, there was nobody found murmuring at the want of it.

Auth. It is, indeed, very amazing, that people should never think more seriously of such an essential and inestimable privilege, considering the many express declarations to that purpose, to be met with both in the scriptures and in the best of prophane authors. Permit me, then, to produce two or three of the most remarkable passages: and first, from Leviticus, Chap.25th.

"And thou shalt number seven sabbaths of years unto thee, seven times seven years; and the space of the seven sabbaths of years shall be unto thee forty and nine years. Then shalt thou cause the trumpet of the Jubilee to sound, on the tenth day of the seventh month, in the day of atonement shall ye make the trumpet sound throughout all your land. And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land, unto all the inhabitants thereof: It shall be a Jubilee unto you; and ye shall return every man unto his possession, and ye shall return every man unto his family ."

And again in the same chapter, it is said,

"The land shall not be sold for ever; for the land is mine; for ye are strangers and sojourners with me."

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Thus you see God Almighty himself is a very notorious leveller, and certainly meant to stir up the people every fiftieth year, to insist upon liberty and equality, or the repossession of their just rights, whether their masters or creditors were agreeable or not, or whether they might deem it seditious or no; and we may suppose that such of the latter as were covetous ungodly men would behave very frowardly, and quit their hold with much reluctance, and would be far from promoting such a revolution.

Then we may be certain that as often as such periodical revolutions happened in favour of the Rights of Man, they must arise from, and were procured by the irresistible importunities of the slaves and landless men.

Thus we find personal liberty and landed property very properly linked together by our all-wise creator, nor is the one of much consequence without the other. Indeed, I think all our landless people had better live in slavery, under humane masters, that would provide them with the necessaries of life, than be turned out of their rights as outcasts upon the face of that earth whereon they must neither feed nor rest.

Well, we have heard what God has said on the subject, let us next hear what man says. Locke, in his treatise of government writes thus:

"Whether we consider natural reason, which tells us, that men, being once born, have a right to their preservation, and consequently to meat and drink, and such other things as nature affords for their subsistence. Or, revelation, which gives us an account of those grants God made of the world to Adam, and to Noah and his sons; it is very clear that God, as King David says, Psalm 115, 16, has given the earth to the children of men, given it to mankind in common."

Here we find this great man concurring in the same fundamental principles, as we shall likewise Puffendorf, in his Whole Duty of Man, according to the law of nature, where he observes, that

"As those are the best members of a community, who without any difficulty allow the same things to their neighbour, that themselves require of him, so those are altogether incapable of society, who, setting a high rate on themselves in regard to others, will take upon them to act any thing towards their neighbour, and expect greater deference, and more respect than the rest of mankind; and, in their

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intolerant manner, demanding a greater portion unto themselves of those things, to which all men having a common right, they can in reason claim no larger a share than other men: whence this also is an universal duty of the law natural, That no man, who has not a peculiar right, ought to arrogate more to himself than he is ready to allow to his fellows, but that he permit other men to enjoy equal privileges with himself."

Such declarations being frequent in all the best authors, one would think they would rouse the most supine to consider their contemptible and degraded situation, who, from being the rightful lords of the creation, and only a little lower than the angels, and crowned by their maker, with glory and honour, tamely prostrate themselves to the earth, to a state worse than a reptile, for anyone that will be insolent enough to pass over.

But, Sir, people never thought it was practicable to enjoy an equal property in land. For the mechanics thought they could not themselves cultivate land if they were possessed of it, and that therefore thousands would be selling their portions to others, which would soon reduce things to the same situation as at present. And besides, they could not be at the trouble, nor put themselves so much out of temper, so as like the Jews, to demand a restitution of the land and an abolition of debts every fiftieth year. No, they would rather sit down contently on their dunghills, under all their affronts, with their wives and children starving about them than give offence to their masters by seditiously claiming their rights as men.

But, by giving the land to the parishes, they will be eased at once of all those troublesome apprehensions; one hearty revolution and one jubilee will do the business for ever: for we find societie once possessed of land do not easily give it up, but are very tenacious of their property of which we have many instances, there hardly being a corporation but what has landed property, and have retained the same for many ages.

So here is a simple, easy, practicable scheme, which people may see realised in every corporate body; wherefore, as people will now think themselves qualified to manage their own estates by the agency of their parish officers, for their

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own advantage, they must of course think landlords of no more use, and will grow weary of them. The payment of rent to a landlord, will be like giving money to a highwayman, and they will pant to be rid of their insupportable burdens all at once. In short, Sir, when the public machine is thus set a going on nature's principles, like nature itself, it will never err to any great degree, but on the least aberrition immediately rebound back to its just equilibrium.

Gent. But, Sir, I am not so partial to corporation govern- ment, but I can see many things amiss in them. There is often much party work, and I am afraid the people at large would reap small benefit from their landed property, as is too much the case in most of the corporations already in being.

Auth. The corporations now in being were established in times of ignorance, when very few were qualified to take cognizance of public affairs, wherefore the mass of the burghers were never suffered in their own persons to make choice of their magistrates or agents, but every company or trade chose an elector, and these were to make a kind of *sham* choice of magistrates and officers, for all this was settled in reality before in the common council; and the same practice to the great ease and content of the sluggish people, is still continued, which I hope you do not think I approve of; for I see no reason why a candidate for a magistracy or other office may not, after proper examination in respect to abilities, be proposed in every distinct company or trade at the same hour, and then in their own persons proceed to election. Candidates would not find it so easy to make a party among the burghers at large, as they do now among a few deputies, electors, or liverymen; but I hope if the people were but once put right (for they never have been so yet) they would be wise enough never to relapse into insignificance again, and find it worth their while to act in person as much as they could, by admitting of no electors or deputies between them and the person or thing to be voted for; for if a parish were found to be too populous to vote conveniently and expeditiously in one place, they would surely have the sense to divide the parish into such a sufficiency of districts or departments as should render business speedy and generally

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satisfactory .

I should likewise expect that they would have the sense to cause the parish accounts to be minutely stated and printed, at least every quarter; and the national accounts to be in the same manner printed, at least every year. And I should likewise with that the rents or rates might be collected monthly, as the poor rate is now, which, when once paid, would be in full of all demands, both for rent and taxes.

In short, Sir, if I thought the people at large would ever become so despicably destitute of common sense, as to be incapable of conducting such simple transactions with any little accidental variations after being thus fairly put right - I say, instead of exciting my pity as they now do, I would, like their tyrants, hold them in the most sovereign contempt and derision; nay, I would rejoice in seeing them all delivered over to cruel task-masters, planters, negro-drivers, landlords, and all the devils on earth. Moreover, I would endeavour to get into some infernal office myself, and make my thong the most terrible of the terrible.

But I am far from apprehending will ever be the case, for it is impossible for the world to become generally ignorant again, as it was before the art of printing. Knowledge has been constantly encreasing ever since that happy invention, and will infallably continue to do so while the world endures.

Is it not astonishing, Sir, that republicans who long to put the affairs of a nation into the hands of commissioners or delegates, should despair of managing the rents or revenues of a parish in the same popular way? Is national democracy easier than parochial? Or are the pure rights of a man less defensible against landlords, than the rights of society against kings? The landlords are, and always were, the first infringers on the rights of man, and pave the sure way to regal tyranny. If the earth would remain barren and uncultivated, and if men, like brutes, would live in caves rather than build houses, etc., by means of their own agents or commissioners, then by all means let them have landlords. But then I, for my part, as much despair of the management of a nation by delegation, as others do of a parish, and therefore to me, kings seem to be to the full as necessary to a state, as landlords to a parish.

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Wherefore in the name of common sense, let us either quietly submit to matters of every description, or manfully aspire after perfect freedom from every imposition. For why should we despair of managing small affairs as well as great.

Gent. But I am at a great loss to conceive what will become of all the landed people, gentlemen of the law, gentlemen's servants, many artificers and tradesmen, entirely dependent on the nobility and gentry, and also the soldiers, for you intend all your citizens to be soldiers.

Auth. You will observe, Sir, that I am proceeding in this affair entirely in confidence of the people having common sense, and that they will, when once put right, put their senses forth to use on all occasions; and, I likewise, suppose they may have as much compassion on those affected by the change of affairs, as justice and necessity will admit of. So, in all probability, on that memorable day, that grand jubilee, when every parish, in some country shall take into its possession its indubitable rights, I mean the land with all its appurtenances, as structures, buildings, and fixtures, and mines, woods, waters, etc., contained within itself: I say, though according to right and system they must seize upon these, I expect they would leave every person in possession of his money and moveable effects to dispose of at his pleasure. The quondam landlords might therefore be reasonably expected to subsist comfortably upon these effects, all their lives with economy, I am sure few of the rest of the people would have as much at that day to their share; and as to their children, they would doubtless suit their education to their prospects, which would be no other than to live as sober, industrious citizens, maintained by their own industry. And what should hinder them by trading or farming to encrease their effects under so mild and cherishing a government, as well as others? The same may be said of gentlemen of the law, and other eminent artists or tradesmen, who might suffer by the change; as for the private soldiers and subalterns, I would wish them to be sent every man to his own parish, there to receive his pay for life, and be employed in training his fellow-parishioners; and the general officers, I hope, the government would provide for in like ample manner. And

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with respect to other individuals, whether servants, mechanics, or revenue officers, who, having no effects accumulated, and might be reduced by any cause whatever, either at this or any future period to require assistance, I hope their respective parishes would prove generous, and sympathizing benefit societies for support of them all, until they could again provide for themselves; and the parishes, no doubt, would contrive to make such persons contribute, if in health, towards the public good by their labours and to this they surely would not object.

Gent. But, friend, what do you expect by all this? Though your scheme should succeed, you cannot expect an estate for your trouble, and both you and your posterity for ever must be content to herd with the common mass, without any hopes of flattering distinction: but if your plan should not succeed, then you must expect a spiteful and powerful opposition in all you go about, from those you are seeking to overthrow.

Mr Paine acts more cautiously, and does not hurt the feelings of any gentleman that is unconnected with government, and so, of course, may retain their good will, notwithstanding all the lengths he goes; and may, even with a good grace, consistent with his reform, enjoy a very handsome estate, and with all his boasted liberty and equality, may roll in his chariot on the labours of his tenants.

Auth. The contempt and ungenerous rebuffs of the opulent I have already pretty well experienced, and do yet expect; but the feelings occasioned by beholding the struggles of temperance, frugality, and industry, after an honest livelihood, which ought to be easily attainable by every one, have always been sufficiently powerful to enable me to despise them. Yes, those sympathetic feelings were impressed deep on my heart, being first excited by the many difficulties my poor parents experienced in providing for, and endeavouring to bring up their numerous family with decency and credit, which I thought very hard, as none could be more temperate, frugal, nor industrious.

I began, Sir, to look round to know the cause of this piercing grievance, and I found thousands rioting in all the

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abominations of luxury and dissipation, as if there had been no being in heaven or earth but themselves, and as if they had been created for the sole purpose of destroying the fruits of the earth; and again, I beheld myriads in a much worse condition than my own family. Then I began to read, and I found the savages in Greenland, America, and at the Cape of Good Hope, could all by their hunting and fishing procure subsistence for their families. Then I enquired whether men left the rude state of a savage voluntarily for greater comforts in a state of civilisation, or whether they were conquered, and compelled into it for the benefit of their conquerors. My experience compelled me to conclude the latter, for I could observe nothing like the effects of a social compact; where- fore, I concluded that all our boasted civilisation is founded alone on conquest; nor will any men leave their rude state to be treated with contempt, pay rents and taxes, and starve among us. Savages may sometimes suffer want though that is but rare, but the poor tamed wretch drags on a despic- able, miserable, and toilsome existence, from generation to generation. This surely looks exceeding bad, that among men in such high refinement and so capable of rendering each other happy, by being reciprocally useful to each other: thousands should nevertheless be in so wretched a state, that savages would not change conditions with them.

Such studies, Sir, as these, were what stirred me up with an irresistible enthusiasm, to lay before the world a plan of society, so consonant to the Rights of Man, that even savages should envy , and wish to become members thereof.