THE ANNALS OF

THE HITOTSUBASHI ACADEMY

Vol. III No. 1 October 1952

MR. SPECTATOR AS AN ECONOMIST[1]

A Social Study of English Literature in the Augustan Age

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I

After a lapse of nearly a century following two historic events of the deepest cultural significance—the publication of the Authorized Version of the English Bible and the death of William Shakespeare—and close upon a period of unprecedented upheavals and their aftermath, out of all which emerged modern democratic and middle-class England, we greet, at the threshold of the eighteenth century, the arrival of an era known as the Augustan Age. This was the age of Swift, Defoe and Pope, as well as of Addison and Steele, who wrote, all of them, brilliantly in the reign of Queen Anne. It prospered in the first bloom of the British Commonwealth, the union of Scotland with England taking place in the sixth year of the same reign. Economically, no less than politically, England's star was steadily ascending, and it may be well to remember that the turbulence of the previous century had put no obstacle to her expansion as a wealthy and

[1] This article forms a part of my larger work on the social and economic aspects of English literature in the Augustan age, which is an outgrowth of my study of Mandeville's *Fable of the Bees*, published, with a Japanese translation and explanatory chapters, in 1948.

powerful nation in world commerce. Mercantilism still prevailed, whole and mighty; England's treasure was being rapidly increased by "Forraign Trade." We may say, therefore, that the age was golden for England not only in her literature, but also, in a real sense, in various aspects of her national economy. A simultaneous flowering of the one by the side of the other is no rare phenomenon in history, whether of the West or the East.[2]

Interest in "this England" has made me turn, with the curiosity of an economic historian, to some representative works of the Augustan age and among others, to the *Spectator* of Addison and Steele, in which we find a form of literature, characteristic of that age and in its temper as English—shall we say?—as the Fabian Society of our own day.[3] Somewhat in the form of a City newsletter written in essay style, it takes its colour and flavour from its milieu, the coffee-house, capturing, and commenting upon daily fluctuations in the mood of the Metropolis and thereby naturally throwing in no despicable amount of economic matter. It never loses the good humour of a refined citizen, neither pandering to the *beau monde* nor pretending to any show of proletarian sympathies. It is a thoroughly common-sense, middle-of-the-road, spokesman of the contemporary English upper middle class, the class now gradually coming into its own and destined to rule England as the century marches on. Is there anything quixotic in a student of economics trying to glean from the wealth of this repository some data of value for his own province?

But before going farther a word about the title of this paper: *Mr.*

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[2] The magnificence of the Augustan age and its enduring achievements is described in masterly fashion by Lytton Strachey in his *Biographical Essays*, London 1948, pp. 68—9:

"The great achievement of the Revolution and the splendid triumphs of Marlborough had brought to England freedom, power and wealth, and that sense of high exhilaration which springs from victory and self-confidence.....There was a great outburst of intellectual activity and aesthetic energy. The amazing discoveries of Newton seemed to open out boundless possibilities of speculation; and in the meantime the great nobles were building palaces and reviving the magnificence of the Augustan Age, while men of letters filled the offices of State. Never, perhaps, before or since, has England been so thoroughly English; never have the national qualities of solidity and sense, independence of judgment and idiosyncrasy of temperament, received a more forcible and complete expression..... Nor was it only in the high places of the nation's consciousness that these signs were manifest; they were visible everywhere, to every stroller through the London streets—in the Royal Exchange, where all the world came crowding to pour its gold into English purses, in the Meeting Houses of the Quakers,.....and in the taverns of Cheapside, where the brawny fellow-countrymen of Newton and Shakespeare sat, in an impenetrable silence, over their English beef and English beer."

[3] The Englishry of the *Spectator* accounts for its inimitability for its admirers in continental Europe who endeavoured without much success to reproduce it for their different reading publics. For the *Nouveau Spectateur Français* and the *Hollandsche Spectator* I may refer the reader to the scholarly work of W. J. B. Pienaar on the *English Influences in Dutch Literature and Justus Van Effen as Intermediary—an Aspect of Eighteenth Century Achievement*, Cambridge, at the University Press, 1929.

Spectator as an Economist. Of course, nothing is so repugnant to Mr. Spectator's turn of mind as to pose as a specialist in any line of speculation, or to use his own picturesque phrase, as a "state-pedant," a "law-pedant," a "book-pedant" or a pedant of any sort whatever. In that sense, Mr. Spectator is no economist at all, least of all one of the subtle theoretical variety. But there is another sense in which he is very much an economist, namely the eighteenth century sense of this word.[4] Suppose, therefore, Mr. Spectator himself were to read the title of this paper, would he think himself treated as an economic scientist as we understand him today? No, quite unlikely, for "Œconomist" to him is not the name of a profession but a description of a personal trait or ability, or to be precise, dexterity in the management of household affairs. An Œconomist, therefore, in a person possessed of "the skill of the purse," as Mr. Spectator himself happily puts it, and by extension, all those who know how to make the most of their own (or other people's) goods or money may be called good Œconomists. Besides, the economy of whose art such a person is a master could be of the widest variety conceivable, so that it was and still is possible to speak, at one end, of the economy of the universe and at the other, of the economy of dress or a hat, not to mention private or public (political) economy. An economist, then, in this practical and comprehensive sense, Mr. Spectator certainly is, though one of a spectatorial kind. So much for the title of the paper; the rest will develop as my story proceeds.

Why, it may be asked, did Mr. Spectator take so much interest in

[4] An eighteenth-century lexicographer, N. Bailey, author of *An Universal Etymological English Dictionary*, first published in 1721, and the eleventh edition of which appeared in 1745, gives us a now curious definition of the word "Œconomicks," viz. "A Part of Moral Philosophy, which treats of the management of Passions." But he defines an "Œconomist" in the orthodox manner as "one who governs or rules a Family, a Steward." Adam Smith means by "Oeconomists" either the French Physiocrats or the kind of persons here described, as e. g. in "If he (*scil.*a great proprietor) was an *œconomist*, he generally found it more profitable to employ his annual savings in new purchases, than in the improvement of his old estate" (*Wealth of Nations*, Bk. III, § 2). His definition of "Political Oeconomy" is clear and distinct: "Political oeconomy, considered as a branch of the science of a statesman or legislator, proposes two distinct objects; first, to provide a plentiful revenue or subsistence for the people, or more properly to enable them to provide such a revenue or subsistence for themselves; and secondly, to supply the state or commonwealth with a revenue sufficient for the public services. It proposes to enrich both the people and the sovereign." (Bk. IV. "Introduction." I am quoting from the first edition.) Incidentally it may be noted here that the word "economy" and its derivatives are spelt with an initial "oe" up to the ninth edition of the *Wealth of Nations*, published in 1799, and that in the subsequent London or Edinburgh editions of 1806, 1811, 1817, 1828, etc., a simple "e" substitutes the "oe." In the same way we find Burke writing in the first (1790) edition of his *Reflections on the Revolution in France*: "But the age of chivalry is gone. That of sophisters, *oeconomists* and calculators, has succeeded;" or, "Mr. Necker's book.....contaihs.....facts relative to public *oeconomy*." A new variation of the word "economist" is "economician," presumably a portmanteau word for "economic technician." *Cf.* "there has been much argument between the more reasonable statisticians, *economicians*, and political philosophers on both sides on this point." (McLaren, *The Scots*, 1951, p. 243)

"Economy" or "economical matters"? How is his keen sense of them to be accounted for? This I think is to be explained in two ways, first with reference to his time and circumstances, and second, to his own character. To take the first point first, his unique periodical made its first appearance in London in 1711, as successor to the *Tatler*, also of Steele and Addison, and continued to exist, with an intermission of nearly a year and a half followed by an important change in editorship, until towards the end of 1714. It thus lived long enough to report and speculate on the death of Queen Anne, so that we may say it is as Augustan as any contemporary work of literature could aspire to be, both in its chronology and in the testimony it bears to the glories of the age,[5] among which commerce and trade are not the least considerable. Significantly enough, G. M. Trevelyan characterizes "the Golden Age of Anne" as "Defoe's England;"[6] what that implies is easily imaginable from the fact that Defoe was the author of *A Plan of the English Commerce* and *The Compleat English Tradesman*, not to mention a host of tracts and pamphlets of an economic character. Let Mr. Spectator explain it in his own way.

> There is no Place in Town which I so much love to frequent as the *Royal Exchange*. It gives me a secret Satisfaction, and in some measure, gratifies my Vanity, as I am an *Englishman*, to see so rich an Assembly of Country-men and Foreigners consulting together on the private Business of Mankind, and making this Metropolis a kind of *Emporium* for the whole Earth. (*Spectator* No. 68)

And he closes this well-known essay by saying,—

> When I have been up on the '*Change*, I have often fancied one of our old Kings standing in Person, where he is represented in Effigy, and looking down upon the wealthy Concourse of People with which that Place is every Day filled. In this Case, how would he be surprized to hear all the Languages of *Europe* spoken in this little Spot of his former Dominions, and to see so many private Men, who in his Time would have been the Vassals of some powerful Baron, Negotiating like Princes for greater Sums of Mony than were formerly to be met with in the Royal Treasury. Trade, without enlarging the *British* Territories, has given us a kind of additional Empire. (*ibid.*)

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[5] See *Spectator* No. 101 in which occurs the following:

"I cannot forbear entertaining my self very often with the Idea of such an imaginary Historian (*scil.* an impartial and unprejudiced historian not writing *recentibus odiis*) describing the Reign of *ANNE* the First, and introducing it with a Preface to his Reader, that he is now entering upon the most shining Part of the *English* Story.....Among the several Persons that flourish in this Glorious Reign, there is no Question but such a future Historian as the Person of whom I am speaking, will make mention of the Men of Genius and Learning, who have now any Figure in the *British* Nation. For my own part, I often flatter myself with the honourable Mention which will then be made of me; and have drawn up a Paragraph in my own Imagination, that I fancy will not be altogether unlike what will be found in some Page or other of this Imaginary Historian. It was under this Reign, says he, that the SPECTATOR Published those little Diurnal Essays which are still extant....."

[6] Trevelyan, *English Social History*, 1942, §x and also the same author's *Illustrated English Social History*, Vol. III, § 1.

Such an England has for her support the principle of freedom in its manifold aspects—religious, political, economic—which she had lately achieved and was now doveloping.[7] "The England so ordered," writes Trevelyan, "was prosperous and in the main contented even in time of war, partly owing to good harvests and cheap food in the first half of Anne's reign. Only during the last three years of a decade of hostilities with France (1702—1712) were there signs of distress and discontent due to war conditions. Otherwise industry, agriculture and commerce all continued to expand; *society moved forward unconsciously towards the Industrial Revolution,* which grew in the next hundred years out of the conditions described by Defoe."[8] It was, then, in the early dawn of England's Industrial Revolution that Mr. Spectator lived and moved and speculated. As an economist, therefore, I would place him, in the order of historical development, between, say, Josiah Child, the seventeenth century mercantilist, and Adam Smith of the later eighteenth century who, in spite of his predominant liberalism, still had some use for certain mercantilistic measures.

Now for Mr. Spectator as my *dramatis persona.* As a matter of fact, he did not represent a single personality but several, Addison and Steele being, of course, the most prominent. The Spectatorial dignity was assumed also by such well-informed men as Eustace Budgell (1686—1737), Henry Martyn (d. 1721), Ambrose Phillips (1675?—1749), Thomas Tickell (1686—1740) and others. Besides this "collective" or "composite" Mr. Spectator there was a wide public of interested readers who frequently wrote letters to "Dear Spec." on a most entertaining variety of current and other topics. Among these voluntary contributors was Peter Motteux, a striking figure in the literary circles of the day. The question now is, "What is there in the social backgrounds of all these writers that may be supposed to have made 'oeconomists' of them in one way or another?" I shall briefly discuss this question.[9]

First of all, let me consider the interesting fact referred to by Strachey in his paragraph already quoted, namely that many of the prominent literary

[7] Defoe mentions as the three essentials of a happy people:
1. To be Uniform in orthodox Principles of Religion, adhering strictly to the common Faith.
2. To be established on one and the same Foundation of Right and Property, Loyalty and Subjection.
3. To he flourishing and prosperous, in just Measures, for Encouragement of Commerce, etc. (*On the Compleat Tradesman,* in *Fog's Journal,* Jan. 11, 1729, reprinted in Lee, *Daniel Defoe, His Life and Recently Discovered Writings,* Vol. II, p. 496) Defoe, being a dissenter, cannot mean by the first "essential" any negation of religious freedom, though he strongly objects to Deism and such-like "atheistical" principles.

[8] *Illustrated English Social History,* p. 2.

[9] I can foresee the objection that may possibly be raised to my treatment of all the members of the Spectator group as a single Mr. Spectator. My answer is that since all of them are making a conscious effort to pool their respective individualities in the common character of Mr. Spectator, conforming, as far as possible, to the same standard of thought and conduct and even of singularities, my "Mr. Spectator" is a unified personality, far more real than the avowedly fictitious "juridic person" lawyers invent for a company or corporation. To me Mr. Spectator is the whole eight volumes of his personified.

men of the Augustan Age were also statesmen and holders of public offices. Their connections naturally gave them opportunities for knowing the world of realities at first hand and in not a few cases, made them conversant with matters of high policy concerning commerce and economics.[10] This can be said particularly of Addison and his group, Addison himself, as Lord of Trade and Secretary of State, achieving the highest social distinction of any man of letters at that time,[11] Steele held offices such as Commissioner of the Stamp Office, Surveyor of the Royal Stables at Hampton Court, Governor of the Royal Company of Comedians and Commissioner of Forfeited Estates in Scotland. He had a seat in the House of Commons and made a significant speech at the time of the South Sea Bubble controversy. Tickell who "was not one of those scholars who wear away their lives in closets"[12] was Under-Secretary of State and Secretary to the Lords Justices of Ireland. Budgell who was a cousin of Addison had a number of offices through his aid. John Hughes became, in 1717, Secretary to the Commissioners of the Peace and eventually enjoyed affluence.[13]

This roughly is a glimpse of Mr. Spectator as a holder of public offices. There were a number of other people who, if not always as Mr. Spectator, at least as valuable contributors wrote on topics of commercial, or broadly economic, interest. Among these, the two who specially interest me and excite my curiosity, are Henry Martyn and Peter Motteux. Martyn is believed to have furnished the *Spectator* with the model of one of its most important characters, Sir Andrew Freeport, champion of commerce and merchants.[14] It is also supposed that some of the unsigned essays discussing economic matters actually came from his pen. Of him the *Dictionary of National Biography* records, in part:

> He was a lawyer by profession, but in consequence of bad health was unable to attend the courts. He wrote a few papers in the 'Spectator' and

[10] Thackeray in his *English Humourists of the Eighteenth Century* writes: "How was it that the young gentlemen from the University got such a prodigious number of places? A lad composed a neat copy of verses at Christchurch or Trinity, in which the death of a great personage was bemoaned, the French King assailed, the Dutch Prince complimented, or the reverse; and the party in power was presently to provide for the young poet; and a commissionership, or a post in the Stamps, or the secretaryship of an Embassy, or a clerkship in the Treasury, came into the bard's possession. A wonderful fruitbearing rod was that of Busby's. What have men of letters got in *our* time? Think, not only of Swift, a king fit to rule in any time or empire—but Addison, Prior, Tickell, Congreve, John Gay, John Dennis, and many others, who got public employment, and pretty little pickings out of the public purse." (*Op. cit.* Everyman's Library, p 48.)

[11] Macaulay gives a good sociolgical reason for Addison's success in the world by attributing his rise to the technique of parliamentary communication in the pamphleteering age. Addison was not much of an orator, but, *was* a lucid and polished writer of the first order. (See Macaulay's essay on Addison.)

[12] [13] *Cf.* Samuel Johnson, *Lives of the English Poets*, under respective names.

[14] "Supposed by Chalmers to have been the model of Sir Andrew Freeport, etc." Bibliographical Index to the *Spectator*, Ev. Lib.

the 'Guardian.' No. 80 is undoubtedly his, and possibly No. 200 and 232. In No. 500 Steele acknowledges his indebtedness to him. He says that Martyn's name could hardly be mentioned in a list in which it would not deserve precedence ; and in an ensuing list gives it precedence over Pope, Hughes, Carey, Tickell, Parnell and Eusden.

In 1713 and 1714, during the controversy concerning the treaty of commerce made with France at the peace of Utrecht, when a number of leading merchants instituted a paper called 'The British Merchant, or Commerce Preserved,' to counteract the influence of Defoe's 'Mercator,' Martyn took a leading part in the enterprise, and it was in a great measure due to his papers in the 'British Merchant' that the treaty was ultimately rejected. As a reward he was made inspector general of imports and exports of customs by the government.[15]

This premier importance of Martyn in the Spectator group and his signal service to the Whig cause and to the interests of British commerce by his successful rivalry with Daniel Defoe, then in the employ of Oxford, Lord Treasurer of the Tory Government,[16] are among the most valuable data in support of my thesis : Mr. Spectator as an Economist. It must be a revelation to Japanese students of either Economics or of English Literature to know that in England the fate of a momentous international commercial treaty was once decided by a controversy between two prominent men of letters of the Augustan Age—Defoe and Mr. Spectator,or Henry Matyn the essayist in this case.

As regards Peter Motteux, remembered chiefly as an English translator of Rabelais and *Don Quixote*, he was singular even among the club of men noted for their singularities. He was, in the first place, a naturalized Englishman like Bernard Mandeville, and also like Mandeville, established for himself a place in the republic of English letters, a place honoured by Dryden with an epistle, *To Mr. Motteux*, ending thus :

> But whence art thou inspired, and thou alone,
> To flourish in an idiom not thy own ?
> It moves our wonder, that a foreign guest
> Should over-match the most, and match the best.
> In under-praising thy deserts, I wrong ;
> Here find the first deficience of our tongue :
> Words, once my stock, are wanting, to commend
> So great a poet and so good a friend.

Pope, too, took notice of him, though in a light quite different from Dryden.

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[15] Written by A. E. J. L. (Arthur Edward John Legge) in D. N. B.

[16] This question viewed from Defoe's side is discussed by William Lee in his *Daniel Defoe, His Life and Recently Discovered Writings*, Vol. I, p. 214 *et seq.* He defends Defoe by calling him "the first and foremost advocate of Free Trade." L. S. (Leslie Stephen) in D. N. B. thinks, however, that Defoe "accepted the ordinary theory of the time, and only endeavoured to prove that the balance of trade would be in favour of England under the proposed arrangement."

But leaving it to the *Cambridge History of English Literature*[17] and other learned treatises to pass judgment upon the literary merits or demerits of Peter Motteux[18] I must go on to the French-born poet's second point of singularity which concerns my subject still more closely. Motteux, in his later life, turned an honest tradesman, and sold China and Japan wares 'cheap for a quick return.' He had composed a poem on tea and dedicated it to Steele who in the *Spectator* writes about a visit to his spacious warehouses filled and adorned with tea, China and Indian ware.[19] Motteux himself advertizes his new trade in a letter to the *Spectator* (No. 288) in which we read:

> Placed as I am in *Leaden-hall-street*, near the *India-Company*, and the Centre of that Trade, Thanks to my fair Customers, my Warehouse is graced as well as the Benefit Days of my Plays and Operas; and the foreign Goods I sell seem no less acceptable than the foreign Books I translated, *Rabelais* and *Don Quixote*: This the Criticks allow me, and while they like my Wares they may dispraise my Writing. But as 'tis not so well known yet that I frequently cross the Seas of late, and speaking *Dutch* and *French*, besides other Languages, I have the Conveniency of buying and importing rich Brocades, *Dutch* Atlasses, with Gold and Silver or without, and other foreign Silks of the newest Modes and best Fabricks, fine *Flanders* Lace, Linnens, and Pictures at the best Hand; this my new way of Trade I have fallen into, I cannot better publish than by an Application to you. My wares are fit only for such as your Readers; and I would beg of you to print this Address in your Paper, that those whose Minds you adorn may take the Ornaments for their Persons and Houses from me.

Then regarding himself, the correspondent has this to say:

> This I hope will plead for one who would lessen the Number of Teazers of the Muses, and who, suiting his Spirit to his Circumstances, humbles the Poet to exalt the Citizen. Like a true Tradesman, I hardly ever look into any Book but those of Accompts. To say the Truth, I cannot, I think, give you a better Idea of my being a downright Man of Traffick, than by acknowledging I oftener read the Adverstisements, than the Matter of even your Paper. I am under a great Temptation to take this Opportunity of admonishing other Writers to follow my Example, and trouble the Town no more.

The interesting point here is that the *Spectator* was considered a suitable medium for expression of such views as these, let alone the obvious advertisement value of so popular a periodical.

To wind up this part of my article, let me return for a brief moment

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[17] "If he won the approval of Dryden and Steele, he was deemed worthy the rancour of Pope, who celebrates him as a bore, 'Talkers I've learned to bear, Motteux I *knew* and in *The Art of Sinking*, puts him among the eels, 'obscene authors that wrap themselves up in their own mud, but are mighty nimble and pert.'" —Charles Whibley in the *Cambridge History of English Literature*, Vol. IX, p. 271.

[18] See Whibley's article above quoted.

[19] *Spectator* No. 552.

to Addison and Steele who were *the* Spectator. I know that they both have admirers, and that the admirers of one are not always the admirers of the other, at any rate in the same degree. Macaulay, for instance, was an enthusiast for Addison but a severe critic of Steele, while Hazlitt preferred Steele to Addison without, however, detracting from the merit of Addison.[21] But this is a comparison between the two as essayists and as "Spectators." As to which of them contributed more Economics to their common medium, the question cannot be disposed of so summarily, because the kind of their contributions in this respect is not the same but quite different. My general impression is that Addison, if anything, likes to address himself to broad aspects of human nature or life and from them to discuss economic matters more or less in a didactic vein. He is thus inclined to be more of a moralist than a mere observer in these matters, and like a man of his official career, welfare, public or national, is the criterion of all his judgments, although his humour and flowing style save him from stiffening into a "stuffed shirt." Take, for example, his essays on Public Credit (No. 3), the Royal Exchange (No. 69), Sir Andrew Freeport's Retirement from Business (No. 549), the Art of Plantation (No. 583), Paper Manufacture (No. 367), and Wealth and Poverty (No. 464 and 646), among many others which are all masterpieces of English prose treating of economic subjects from a larger human point of view.

Steele, by comparison, impresses me as being much nearer an economist according to our modern conception ; he is certainly a practical thinker on the subject while being at the same time a highly entertaining and skilful writer, an undoubted peer of Addison. His observations are shrewd and concrete and more in touch with the economic realities of his age than those of his chief partner. Incidentally it may be recalled here that Steele was

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[20] *Spectator* No. 288.

[21] After a most enthusiastic praise of Addison as an essayist, Macaulay writes: "We say this of Addison alone ; for Addison is the Spectator. About three sevenths of the work are his ; and it is no exaggeration to say that his worst essay is as good as the best essay of any of his coadjutors." It is easy to see that in this statement Macaulay has in mind Steele whom he calls "a rake among scholars and a scholar among rakes." Then comparing Steele's periodical, *the Englishman* with Addison's eighth volume of the *Spectator*, he remarks, "Nothing can be more striking than the contrast between the *Englishman* and the eighth volume of the *Spectator*, between Steele without Addison and Addison without Steele. *The Englishman* is forgotten ; the eighth volume of the *Spectator* contains, perhaps, the finest essays, both serious and playful, in the English language." (Macaulay, *The Life and Writings of Addison, Edinburgh Review*, July, 1843)

Hazlitt writes: "Steele seems to have gone into his closet chiefly to set down what he observed out of doors. Addison seems to have spent most of his time in his study, and to have spun out and wire-drawn the hints, which he borrowed from Steele, or took from nature, to the utmost. I am far from wishing to depreciate Addison's talents, but I am anxious to do justice to Steele, who was, I think, upon the whole, a less artificial and more original writer." William Hazlitt, *English Comic Writers*, Ev. Lib. p. 96.

projector enough to float the bubble scheme of a "fishpool" for conveying fish alive in tanks from the fishing ground to the London market. The initial attraction of his company was such that "£160 was paid as a premium before any call had been made."[22] Among his *Spectator* papers we find a considerable number of excellent and suggestive essays of economic import, such as those on Sir Andrew Freeport's View of the National Importance of Commerce (No. 2) and his Defence of Merchants against Sir Roger's Charge of Carthagian Faith (No. 174), the Story of Inkle and Yarico (No. 11), a City Romance or the Liberality of Merchants (No. 248) and its sequel, the Economics of "Ready-Money Trade" or Cash Sales (No. 526), Confessions of Ephraim Weed on his Love of Money (No. 450), Fear of Poverty Undermining Rural Economy (No. 114), etc. Steele is particularly interested in various social classes and his speculations on servants reveal a wealth of knowledge of one of the vexing problems of the day. His tracing of the chief cause of the trouble to the custom of giving board-wages to servants is a case in point. (No. 88) It will thus be seen that Steele's concern, on the whole, is more frequently with the private economy of merchants and other citizens than with economy of a public nature, which is Addison's favourite theme of discussion. Paraphrasing Hazlitt we may say that he is more of a pedestrian realist than "the silent parson in a tye-wig."[23] A homely observation like the following[24] may serve as an illustration of Steele's being a man of the world and a good judge of the temper of the times:

> The other Day as I passed along the Street, I saw a sturdy Prentice-Boy Disputing with an Hackney-Coachman; and in an Instant, upon some word of Provocation, throw off his Hat and Perriwig, clench his Fist, and strike the Fellow a Cut on the Face; at the same time calling him Rascal, and telling him he was a Gentleman's Son. The young Gentleman was, it seems, bound to a Blacksmith; and the Debate arose about some Payment for some Work done about a Coach, near which they fought. His Master, during the Combat, was full of the Boy's Praises; and as he called to him to play with Hand and Foot, and throw in his Head, he made us all who stood

[22] W.R. Scott, *The Constitution and Finance of English, Scottish and Irish Joint-Stock Companies*, Vol. I, p. 418. This project gave occasion to Defoe's satirical article in *Mist's Journal*, Sept. 6, 1718, in which half banteringly and half seriously the author of *An Essay. upon Projects* raises five objections to the fishpool scheme, saying that "it may starve all our Thames Fishermen, they can scarcely vend the live Fish they now take.—but if we bring Sturgeons, Mackrel, Soals, &c. alive, how are they likewise to sell their Barbels, Roach, and Gudgions?" "I am told," he also says, "that Sir *Richard* designs a Cargo of live Thames Salmon for a Present to the Emperor of China. If it should please his Gusto, and thence excite him to a Conquest of our Island, I'll say no more, (not being willing to meddle with Politicks) but that we shall have brought our Fish to a fine Market." (Lee, *op. cit.* Vol. II, p. 69) This is the second difference of opinion on economic questions that we have noted between Defoe and Mr. Spectator collectively considered.

[23] This is said to be Mandeville's jocular characterization of Addison after having passed an evening in his company. Johnson repeats it in his *Lives of the English Poets*, under Addison.

[24] *Spectator* No, 202.

> round him of his Party, by declaring the Boy had very good Friends, and he could trust him with untold Gold.....The Advantages of his having good Friends, as his Master expressed it, was not lazily urged; but he shewed himself Superior to the Coachman in his Personal Qualities of Courage and Activity, to confirm that of his being well Allyed, before his Birth was of any Service to him.

And Mr. Spectator's conclusion is important and obviously not without its economic consequences:

> If one might Moralize from this silly Story, a Man wou'd say, that whatever advantages of Fortune, Birth, or any other Good, People possess above the rest of the World, they should shew collateral Eminence besides those Distinctions; or those Distinctions will avail only to keep up common Decencies and Ceremonies, and not to preserve a real place of Favour or Esteem in the Opinion and common Sense of their Fellow Creatures.

II

A general survey of whatever economics may be squeezed out of the *Spectator* inevitably calls for attention to a number of its characteristic features or tendencies. With these I shall now deal at some length. There are four items which I should like to discuss in this connection: the essentially bourgeois nature of Mr. Spectator's economics, the influence of his classical scholarship on his economic speculations, Puritanism in relation to Mr. Spectator's economics, and comparison with Defoe and Mandeville.

Needless to say, Mr. Spectator is a Londoner and he is all wrapped up in the business of the Metropolis. That he is a great friend of Trade and Commerce and consequently of Merchants is already clear from what has been written above. He himself has "been taken for a Merchant upon the *Exchange* for above these ten Years, and sometimes passes for a *Jew* in the Assembly of Stock-Jobbers at *Jonathan's*."[25] In fact he feels himself so much of the City and so imbued with its pride that he once, though in a different capacity,[26] made a careful distinction between the citizen and his aberrations called "cits." Nothing brings into relief his frame of mind as a city man so well as the delightful series of papers which he wrote, as from the country estate of Sir Roger de Coverley. How he there rationalizes on the absurdity and wastefulness of many rural customs and institutions! His reflections on the busy idler of the village, Will Wimble and younger brothers of great families like him who, thinking trade beneath them, waste away their lives in the country, are pertinent and thought-provoking.[27] While

[25] *Spectator* No. 1.
[26] *Tatler* No. 25.
[27] *Spectator* No. 108.

professing a deep and impartial concern over conflicts between the trading and landed interests, he yet leaves the unmistakable impression that his heart is always with the former, rather than the latter; he allots, for one thing, much more space to trade than to landed interests. This tendency is unquestionably a corollary of Mr. Spectator's Whiggism, which, in his case, is a factor to be reckoned with as a mental background, rather than as a political platform.[28] A revealing essay from this point of view is his third paper discribing a vision of public credit and which is a Whiggish allegory of the financial crisis following the Revolution. It begins with brief mention of Mr. Spectator's visit to the Bank of England[29] whose "just and regular economy" delights his soul; it then narrates the story of a dream he dreams that night in which he witnesses first the collapse, and then the revival, of public credit symbolized by a beautiful virgin seated on a throne of gold—collapse, by the invasion of "half a dozen of the most hideous phantoms" including that of a young man,[30] about twenty-two years old, menacing the Act of Settlement; and revival, because

> In the Room of the frightful Spectres, there now enter'd a second Dance of Apparitions very agreeably matched together, and made up of very amiable Phantoms. The first Pair was Liberty with Monarchy at her right Hand: The second was Moderation leading in Religion; and the third a Person[31] whom I had never seen, with the genius of *Great Britain*. At their first Entrance the Lady revived, the Bags swell'd to their former Bulk, the Piles of Faggots and Heaps of Paper changed into Pyramids of Guineas.[32]

This is Whiggery in an undisguised form, hitched to the star of the Revolution principles.

The same spirit and thought tendency make Mr. Spectator confess that were he to choose his religion and the government he would live under, he would without hesitation give preference to those of his own country.[33] And as regards the form of government, the most reasonable, to

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[28] "I never espoused any Party with Violence, and am resolved to observe an exact Neutrality between the Whigs and Tories, unless I shall be forced to declare myself by the Hostilities of either Side." (*Spectator* No. 1) He has numerous delightful pieces on excesses of the party spirit, e. g. *An Account of Party-Patches*. (No. 81)

[29] "Independents were the principal founders of the Bank of England.....To do business, State business, with such persons, and to visit them with penalties for their creed and discipline was an absurdity. Toleration was the necessary outcome of the new finance, as it was of the new political system. The landed interests hated them, but their hatred was impotent." J. E. Thorold Rogers, *The Economic Interpretation of History*, 1909, p. 86.

[30] Son of James II, the Old Pretender, who would repudiate the National Debt.

[31] The Elector of Hanover who became King George I of England in 1714.

[32] "The happy change from 'Heaps of Paper' to 'Pyramids of Guineas' has its historical original in Montagu's scheme for the restoration of the currency." *Spectator*, Ev Lib., Vol. I, notes, p. 517. The Tories are said to have hated "commodious gold." and blessed paper credit.

[33] *Spectator* No. 287.

his mind, is that which is most conformable to the equality we find in human nature, "provided it be consistent with public Peace and Tranquility." He calls this Liberty, and among the fruits of liberty he counts riches and plenty, as well as learning and all the liberal arts. Well may he admire John Locke as a political thinker, and pay such deference to the poetry of Milton!

Another notable fact about the *Spectator* is that it was run by a group of University men. Even the character of the London merchant, Sir Andrew Freeport, is said to have been modelled upon Henry Martyn who had a high academic career, in seeming contradiction to the Spectatorial opinion that trade and commerce require no higher education, least of all, a university education. Thus we find a distinct note of classicism in Mr. Spectator as represented by Addison and Steele who are both eminent classical scholars, or by any important associate of theirs. He apparently delights in his editorial custom of introducing each day's paper with a pithy classical quotation, usually Latin and rarely Greek, as a sort of literary *hors d'oeuvre* to the main course of the essay. In the *Spectator*, more than in the *Tatler* and the *Guardian*, this bit of refined pedantry is so conspicuous that we hear occasional complaints of it from "not so classical" readers.

Quite naturally, Mr. Spectator's economics is richly flavoured with classical wisdom, which tends to make it, to that extent, didactic in character. If, in spite of that, he manages to reserve for himself a large margin of fresh and breezy humanity, the secret, or at least part of that secret, must lie in his predilection for Latin, rather than Greek, authors, and above all, for Horace and Virgil from both of whom come nearly half of the total 633 opening quotations. Next to them rank, as suppliers of mottoes, Juvenal and Ovid, followed by Cicero and other Latin writers. The Greek philosophers have contributed only a small number of these *hors d'oeuvre* delicacies, the reason given being that the Greek alphabet does not look very appetizing to Mr. Spectator's readers. Be that as it may, the predominance thus given to the Latin poets and Cicero is highly suggestive, because the mottoes taken from them set the tone and determine the drift of the essays commencing with them. They—particularly Horace, Virgil and Juvenal—have made for the ease and liveliness of many of his reflections and freed him from the stuffiness of pedantry. No English authors except Shakespeare and Bacon who, however, occur only a few times. are quoted for the purpose, nor, quite understandably, do we find any Biblical passage at the top of an essay.

Another thought suggests itself to me at this point. It may be that Mr. Spectator, being pre-eminently a man of action, feels drawn more towards Romans who were also men of action than towards Greeks who were thinkers and philosophers. His frequent. appeal to the authority of

Cicero instead of the philosophy of Plato or Aristotle is probably to be explained in that light. Here, too, may be sought the key for understanding the difference between him and those writers on economic matters who likewise found their inspiration in classical thought, e. g. Thomas Aquinas before, and John Ruskin after, him. The classical sources drawn upon are, to some extent, common to all three of them, and the conclusions reached are not at all dissimilar in most cases. But there is a distinct difference of nuance or flavour among them. Thomas is authoritative and categorical in the spirit of "bene distinguere," Ruskin moral and enthusiastic, but Mr. Spectator takes, all along, a common-sense attitude of prudence. Even as a preacher he is never dry and monotonous.

There is comparatively little abstract reasoning in Mr. Spectator's moralizings in general and those on economic affairs in particular. In this he is following, consciously or unconsciously, the precedent set by Horace's father, as narrated by the poet in *Satire* I, iv.

> For I shall say anything too freely, if perhaps too ludicrously, you must favour me by your indulgence with this allowance. For my excellent father inured me to this custom, that by noting each particular vice I might avoid by the example [of others]. When he exhorted me that I should live thriftily, frugally, and content with what he had provided for me; don't you see, [would he say,] how wretchedly the son of Albius lives? and how miserably Barrus? A strong lesson to hinder any one from squandering away his patrimony.....The philosopher may tell you the reasons for what is better to be avoided, and what to be pursued. It is sufficient for me, if I can preserve the traditional morality from my forefathers, and keep your life and reputation inviolate, so long as you stand in need of a guardian. (Translation by Christopher Smart)

An example or two will make this point clear. A good household economy is discussed with vivid touches in No. 114 in which the opposite vices of avarice and prodigality are illustrated by the story of Laertes and Irus, followed by a maxim on living within one's compass. Although the emphasis here is on the undue fear of poverty, on which Horace (*Epist.* I. XXVIII) supplies the top-page quotation, the central thesis is that which St. Thomas expounds in universal terms with that serene detachment which characterizes the Angellic Doctor.[34] Again, note the manner in which Mr. Spectator speaks about the grievous consequences of indiscreet indebtedness. It is casual and concrete, after the manner of Horace's father. There is no *ex cathedra* sermon against reckless running into debt; the whole develops out of Mr. Spectator's accidental encounter with a strange kind of a beggar in whom he recognizes an old, once-wealthy acquaintance. This is how he begins the story:

[34] *Summa Theologica*, II. 2. 117—9.

> Passing under *Ludgate* the other Day I heard a Voice bawling for Charity, which I thought I had somewhere heard before. Coming near to the Grate, the Prisoner called me by my Name, and desired I would throw something into the Box: I was out of Countenance for him, and did as he bid me, by putting in half a Crown. I went away reflecting upon the strange Constitution of some Men, and how meanly they behave themselves in all Sorts of Conditions.....This Accident made me muse upon the Circumstance of being in Debt in general, and solve in my Mind what Tempers were most apt to fall into this Errour of Life, as the Misfortune it must needs be to languish under such Pressures.[35]

The real cause of this man's downfall was his ignorance of the right behaviour of a man of wealth which made him insolent and extravagant in riches and shameless in poverty. The motto Mr. Spectator has chosen for this piece is Juvenal's *Satire* iii. 33: *Caput domina venale sub hasta* (His fortunes ruined, and himself a slave.)—a dramatic passage not likely to be found in the *Summa Theologica*![36]

It is not, however, all of his stories that can be strengthened by the support of classical learning. Inevitably there occur discrepancies between the social realities of Augustan England and those of the classical world. In such cases mottoes are not so easily available. Take the question of usury, for example. Mr. Spectator's England did not condemn the giving or taking of interest, unless the rate exceeded the legal maximum.[37] The story he tells with much feeling as a "City Romance"[38] centres around a generous London merchant rescuing a fellow merchant on the verge of bankruptcy by a timely accommodation of a considerable sum of money in cash and credit. The chivalry of Sir William Scawen, for that was his name, was such that he lent his friend *at common interest*, according to Mr. Spectator. Now, could our author call in any classical witness to join in his praises of "lending at common interest"? Probably Shylock might find such a money lender less abominable than another merchant "who lends out money gratis and brings down the rate of usance here with us in Venice." But in a *romance*, whether of the City or of any other kind, lending at interest, whatever its rate, does not look very "grateful," although in its place it must be good business discipline. We know that both Aristotle

[35] *Spectator* No. 82.

[36] This manner of story-telling is not unlike the method employed by the "Shingaku" (literally, "Spiritual Learning") school of Confucianism which prevailed among the *Chonin* (bourgeois) class of the Tokugawa period. *Shingaku Dowa* (Shingaku Moral Talks) used plain language and familiar illustrations to get their morals across. By comparison, Mr. Spectator is "highbrow" and far less plebeian than the tellers of *Shingaku Dowa*.

[37] "In 1554, a statute was passed, authorising lenders to charge 10 per cent. interest. In 1624, the legal rate was reduced to 8 per cent.; and in the reign of Queen Anne it was further reduced to 5 per cent., at which it still continues." M'Culloch, *A Dictionary of Commerce and Commercial Navigation*, second edition, London, 1834, Vol. I p. 715.

[38] *Spectator* No. 346.

and Thomas[39] would have frowned upon Mr. Spectator's "City Romance" as a flagrant case of usury, or at least, as a breach of what Thomas valued as the virtue of "Honestas." But at the same time we must not forget that between his time and Mr. Spectator's much water had flowed under London Bridge.

In spite of all that has been said in the foregoing paragraphs, the fact remains, however, that the effect of Mr. Spectator's rather heavy borrowings from classical sources has been in the direction of making him a moralist rather than a 100% realist. Here is one point among many which differentiates Mr. Spectator from Defoe[40] and Mandeville[41] as economic writers. These latter, though not lacking in Greek and Latin scholarship, are not such outstanding classicists as either Addison or Steele. They are certainly on that account freer from the influence of the moralizing wise men of old and express themselves independently of what others may or may not have said before them on the same subject. They are realists and handle their problems accordingly. They, too, may be said to moralize, if moralizing may include advancing opinions with a view to the ultimate happiness of a people or nation, for there is not a shadow of doubt that both of them had close at heart the wealth and welfare of the British Empire. But it is evident that they are not moralists in the Spectatorial sense. On the other hand, they are keener observers of economic facts and shrewder and bolder interpreters of their significance to their own country and to the world. We may say, therefore, that if Mr. Spectator is a sort of economic Schoolman swearing by Horace, Virgil and Cicero, Defoe and Mandeville are in many ways sophists of the new age.

So much for Mr. Spectator's classicism and its manifold consequences. Next I want to turn my attention briefly to the so-called bourgeois character of Mr. Spectator and its religious implications. In this connection I notice that he sets great store by such virtues and principles of action as are supposed to have found especial favour with the middle class community of early eighteenth-century England. Among them are industry, honesty, simplicity, thrift, punctuality, sobriety and such-like qualities or habits of life on which thrives "the graver portion of the Commonwealth," as Mr. Spectator might say. They are praised either as such or indirectly by the

[39] "Whatever is paid in excess of the principal, whether it be in money or in any other form of interest, is usury" is the accepted definition of usury by canonists and scholastics.

[40] Defoe was touchy about his classical scholarship. Recall what he says in his own defence against Tutchin's attack on this head and Swift's reflection upon his scholarship, in reply to which he writes in part: "I have been in my time pretty well master of five languages, and have not lost them yet, though I write no bill over my door, nor set Latin quotations on the front of the *Review*". (Lee, *op. cit.*, Vol.I, p. 11—13)

[41] There is ample evidence of Mandeville's knowledge of Latin in the *Fable of the Bees*, especially in its second volume in which he discusses language and literature rather fully. He wrote some of his earlient works in Latin.

blame of their opposite vices. Mr. Spectator's reflections on these virtues and vices will be discussed in fuller detail in another section of my article. Let me here quote the pertinent words of Prof. Cazamian:

> Much more solidly than with Pope and Swift, indeed, Defoe, Addison, and Steele are psychologically connected with Richardson, in line with whom they already fiind themselves; and after Richardson, *middle-class literature, of which they mark the advent*,[42] will gradually become one of the indirect causes of Romanticism.....(But) since 1688, the upper middle class is more and more commingling with the hereditary nobility, or rising to a position by its side in the State; and without openly demanding the division of power, it is making its individual influence felt. The middle class as a whole—in the sense in which it stretches down to the common people—is not without sharing in its progress. The centre of social gravity tends to shift in the direction of some human element, whose formation, modern and urban as it is, may receive, for want of a more exact term, the name of bourgeois. Thus a compromise is established, in which the influences of the middle order of the State are every day becoming more active.[43]

A point intimately related to the "bourgeois" character of Mr. Spectator is its bearing upon Puritanism, or rather the ascetic way of life common to the various sects, particularly those under Calvinistic influence. Puritanism in this sense has acquired a new significance to students of social science since the publication of Max Weber's now famous thesis on the development of the spirit of modern capitalism. In consequence it is at present generally recognized that the religious and social life of the nonconformists was a factor of primary importance in the formation of that peculiar ethos of Anglo-American industrialism. Our question, then, is, "What do we find in Mr. Spectator's attitude towards Christianity that is worth considering in the light of the Weberian thesis?" The answer is "Not much, if at all," and the reason is simple: Mr. Spectator is not a Puritan nor a strait-laced Christian of any sort. But this does not mean at all that there are no economic implications of his type of faith or religious attitude.

Mr. Spectator makes no secret of what he thinks of Puritanism or Calvinism in its British form, in that stern rejection of the so-called Puritanic frame of mind which forms the substance of his 494th speculation. "About an Age ago" he begins, "it was the Fashion in England for every one that would be thought religious, to throw as much Sanctity as possible into his Face, and in particular to abstain from all Appearances of Mirth and Pleasantry, which were looked upon as the Marks of a Carnal Mind. The Saint was of a sorrowful Countenance, and generally eaten up with

[42] The italics are mine.

[43] Legouis and Cazamian, *A History of English Literature*, revised English edition, 1948, pp. 769 & 770.

Spleen and Melancholy." Then he tells of a young scholar "fitted out with a good Cargo of Latin and Greek" going through an examination for election in his College. This is how he describes the actual examination and it is suggestive as showing Mr. Spectator's reaction to the Doctrine of Predestination :

> The young Man trembled ; but his Fears encreased, when, instead of being asked what Progress he had made in Learning, he was examined how he abounded in Grace. His *Latin* and *Greek* stood him in little stead ; he was to give an Account only of the State of his Soul, whether he was of the Number of the Elect ; what was the Occasion of his Conversion ; upon what Day of the Month, and Hour of the Day it happened ; how it was carried on and compleated ? The whole Examination was summed up with one short Sentence, Namely, *Whether he was prepared for Death* ?

Farther on in the same paper he observes :

> In short, those who represent Religion in so unamiable a Light, are like the Spies sent by Moses to make a Discovery of the Land of Promise, when by their Reports they discouraged the People from entering upon it. Those who shew us the Joy, the Chearfulness and the good Humour, that naturally springs up in this happy State, are like the Spies bringing along with them the Clusters of Grapes, and delicious Fruits, that might invite their Companions into the pleasant Country which produced them. An eminent Pagan Writer has made a Discourse, to shew that the Atheist, who denies a God, does him less Dishonour than the Man who owns his Being, but at the same Time believes him to be cruel, hard to please, and terrible to humane Nature. For my own Part, says he, I wou'd rather it shou'd be said of me, that there was never any such Man as *Plutarch*, than that *Plutarch* was ill-natured, capricious or inhumane.

All of which confirms how far removed our author is from Puritanism and all that it implies.[44]

To us the important fact here is his stand on religious toleration which has already been touched upon more than once. He believes, with Voltaire[45] and many others, that toleration is a great liberator and encourager of commerce, and that it offers thereby an efficient condition for national enrichment. It is, therefore, quite natural that he should be free from malice towards such persecuted people as Jews and Quakers. To

[44] Max Weber's emphasis upon the doctrine of predestination as an essential feature of Puritanism seems to me excessive, as it is doubtful to what extent the rising middle class among which Puritanism largely prevailed pinned its faith to that doctrine. The Quakers as a sect did not subscribe to its narrow view of salvation. Mr. Spectator's opinion here set forth must have been shared by many people belonging to various denominations.

[45] See particularly letters 6 and 10 of his *Lettres Philosophiques*. In the former he writes : "Entrez dans la Bourse de Londres, cette place plus respectable que des Cours ; vous y voyez rassemblés les députs de toutes les Nations pour l'utilité des hommes. Là, le Juif, le Mahométan et le Chrétien traitent l'un avec l'autre come s'ils étaient de la même Religion, ne donnent le nom d'infidèles qu'à ceux qui font banqueroute ; là, le Presbytérien se fit à l'Anabaptiste, et l'Anglican reçoit la promesse du Quaker. Un Anglais, comme homme libre, va au Ciel par le chemin qui lui plaît."

the Jews he devotes a whole paper[46] describing, in a friendly spirit, their characteristics as a race. In this description he says among others that "they are, indeed, so disseminated through all the trading Parts of the World, that they are become the Instruments by which the most distant Nations converse with one another, and by which Mankind are knit together in a general Correspondence," and that "they are like the Pegs and Nails in a great Building, which, though they are little valued in themselves, are absolutely necessary to keep the whole Frame together." References to Quakers, on the other hand, are scattered and casual, and more or less in a humorous strain, for to Mr. Spectator, as indeed to all his contemporaries, Quakers were "queer people" fanatical in their faith and singular in their way of life. But he does them the justice of depicting his Quaker characters as people honest, peace-loving, and simple and cleanly in their habits of life, as in the case of Ephraim in No. 132 and of "a pretty young Quaker woman" in No. 631. Comparison between these two pieces is interesting, as they represent Steele and Addison as characterizers of the Quaker, both, curiously enough, in the role of fellow passengers in a stage-coach. Addison as Mr. Spectator has left us a charming sketch of a young Quakeress which reminds us of Lamb's[47] of a century later: "Every Quakeress is a lily." He writes:

> On the other hand, the pretty Quaker appeared in all the Elegance of Cleanliness. Not a Speck was to be found on her. A clear, clean oval Face, just edged about with little thin Plaits of the purest Cambrick, received great Advantages from the Shade of her black Hood; as did the Whiteness of her Arms from that sober coloured Stuff, in which she had Cloathed her self. The Plainness of her Dress was very well suited to the Simplicity of her Phrases; all which put together, *though they could not give me a great Opinion of her Religion*,[48] they did of her Innocence.

Be this as it may, I who have labeled Mr. Spectator as an economist cannot but wish that he had taken due notice of what great economic assets to the nation these honest frugal and industrious Quakers represented in those days of cheats and bubbles among the multitude, and of bribery in high quarters.[49] Voltaire understood them much better.[50]

On the whole, we may safely conclude that in religion, as in other things, Mr. Spectator is a confirmed middle-of-the-roader, neither an atheist nor an enthusiast, perhaps following the wisdom of the homely German proverb, "Allzuviel ist ungesund." In fact he is so well balanced in this

[46] *Spectator* No. 495.

[47] *The Essays of Elia* (At a Quakers' Meeting). "The very garments of a Quaker seem incapable of receiving a soil; and cleanliness in them to be something more than the absences of its contrary."

[48] My italics

[49] See Isabel Grubb, *Quakerism and Industry before 1800*, London 1929.

[50] *Lettres Philosophiques*, 1-4.

respect that I venture to suspect that his Anglicanism is of the same sort as Shaftesbury's on which Leslie Stephen makes a not very savoury comment: "His Utopia implied an era of general indifference, in which the ignorant might be provided with dogmas for their amusement; and wise men smile at them in secret. *The Church, in short, was excellent as a national refrigerating machine*; but no cultivated person could believe in its doctrines."[51] At any rate, there is little doubt that prudence plays a large part in all discussions of a religious character in the *Spectator* and whatever bearing these may have on economics seems attributable to that fact. Consider, for example, Sir Andrew's argument against giving alms to beggars (No. 232): "The very alms they receive from us are the wages of idleness" or Mr. Spectator's (Steele's) defence of Charity-Schools in No. 294 in which it is said: It is methinks a most laudable Institution, this, if it were of no other Expectation than that of producing a Race of good and useful Servants. What would not a Man do, in common Prudence, to lay out in Purchase of one about him, who would add to all his Orders he gave the Weight of the Commandments to inforce an Obedience to them? for one who would consider his Master as his Father, his Friend, and Benefactor upon the easy Terms, and in Expectation of no other Return but moderate Wages and gentle Usage?"

Mr. Spectator's argument *for* charity schools seems, in its utilitarianism, not much different from Mandeville's[52] *against* the same institution. Both look forward to economic benefits, either to individuals or the nation or both, that may result from the existence or abolition of charity schools. When religion becomes so utilitarian in its spirit, we may almost regard it as a next-door neighbour of Deism or Atheism. But the economic consequences of such a religion are by no means less important or less far-reaching than those of Puritanism.

III

From what has preceded I hope the general character of Mr. Spectator's economics has come out in sufficiently clear, if imperfect, outline. My next task is to examine it in detail, taking up the more important problems involved. I shall do so in two main parts, general and particular; the

[51] *English Thought in the Eighteenth Century*, Vol. II, § IX, III. The italics are mine,

[52] Mandeville vehemently attacks the institution of charity schools in his essay entitled *An Essay on Charity and Charity-Schools* which was published in 1723 as a part of his *Fable of the Bees*. Mandeville bases his position upon British mercantilism which required an abundance of cheap, ignorant, obedient and tractable labour, and argues that education of the poor runs counter to the fulfillment of that national need.

general part dealing (of course, as far as my material permits—material, that is to say, which is literary, and often whimsical) with matters of principle and the particular with those of application.

The first question that confronts me is Mr. Spectator's conception of wealth. On this head I have found that his attitude varies according as wealth concerns individuals or the State, that is, the British Empire. In the latter case wealth, "England's treasure," is treated as unmixed good; it is desirable unconditionally and in unlimited quantities. That is why he is so untiring in his praise of Commerce and Foreign Trade. But when the question turns upon private wealth, his tune becomes different; he preaches the golden mean in earthly possessions. Nowhere in his pages, however, does Mr. Spectator give any suggestion of his disdain of wealth with its usual corollary of a glorification of poverty such as the Franciscans were at one time famous for. It is, on the contrary, the "glory of wealth," a significant eighteenth-century phrase, that we more frequently hear dilated upon by Mr. Spectator. This, one would say, is a matter of course, since he was writing in the heyday of Augustan England. I agree, but the point is, "That being so, why should he be playing the moralist all the time in the matter of private wealth?" The influence of his classics, as I have pointed out, is one answer to the question; but perhaps more important still, we have to think of the extravagances of the age to which contemporary literature bears witness in one way or another, as we may see e. g. in Pope's *Moral Essays*.

As mentioned at the outset of this paper, Mr. Spectator is an economist as the eighteenth century understood him. He introduces himself in the very first essay of the *Spectator*, saying "I am very well versed in the Theory of an Husband, or a Father, and can discern the Errors in the Œconomy, Business and Diversion of others, better than those engaged in them." It is scarcely necessary, I think, to explain that by "the theory of an husband" he means "husbandry" or the art of household management, which in fact *is* "Œconomy." But what, exactly, is this "theory of an husband"? What line of conduct does it approve or disapprove?

The principle of Œconomy, he believes with his classical authorities, consists in the just measure of wealth, or in his own words, in "the middle condition."[53] "The middle Condition," he says, "seems to be the most

[53] It would be interesting to compare Mr. Spectator's "middle condition" with Defoe's "middle state," upon the excellences of which Robinson Crusoe's father expostulates with his son, as "the best state in the world, the most suited to human happiness, not exposed to the miseries and hardships, the labour and sufferings of the mechanick part of mankind, and not embarass'd with the pride, luxury, ambition, and envy of the upper part of mankind." Defoe here has in mind, among other things, the economic benefits of the middle state, as he writes in the same place that "peace and plenty were the hand-maids of a middle fortune." Mr. Spectator is thoroughly classical in this respect, thinking, at least in appearance, only of virtue, knowledge and wisdom.

advantageously situated for the gaining of Wisdom. Poverty turns our Thoughts too much upon the supplying of our wants, and Richcs upon enjoying our Superfluities; and as *Cowley* has said in another Case, *It is hard for a Man to keep a steady Eye upon Truth, who is always in a Battel or a Triumph.*" What really matters, therefore, is to avoid the excesses of both, as in moderation riches, and even poverty, have their advantages, namely, Humanity, Good Nature, Magnanimity, and a Sense of Honour, on one side, and Humility, Patience, Industry and Temperance, on the other. Harmony of these qualities is desirable for a community based upon the immutability of social status and the "sacred" inviolability of private property tempered by classical and Christian traditions.

Maintenance of the middle condition is made possible by observing a happy medium between avarice and prodigality, as Aristotle and St. Thomas had taught long before Mr. Spectator. Only, as has been noted, he treats the subject more realistically by reference to the concrete, though perhaps mostly imaginary, cases of persons who have failed in economic prudence. The following is the story of a peevish country gentleman whom he met as a fellow guest at Sir Roger's dinner.[54]

> Upon hearing his Name, I knew him to be a Gentleman of a considerable Fortune in this Country, but greatly in Debt. What gives the unhappy Man this Peevishness of Mind, is, that his Estate is dipp'd, and is eating up with Usury; and yet he has not the heart to sell any Part of it. His proud Stomach, at the Cost of restless Nights, constant inquietudes, Danger of Affronts, and a thousand nameless Inconveniences, preserves this Canker in his Fortune, rather than it shall be said he is a Man of fewer Hundreds a Year than he has been commonly reputed. Thus he endures the Torment of Poverty, to avoid the Name of being less rich. If you go to his House you see great Plenty; but served in a Manner that shows it is all unnatural, and that the Master's Mind is not at home. There is a certain Waste and Carelessness in the Air of every thing, and the whole appears but a covered Indigence, a magnificent Poverty.[55] That Neatness and Chearfulness which attends the Table of him who lives within Compass, is wanting and is exchanged for a libertine Way of Service in all about him.

Mr. Spectator expresses his disapproval of this kind of false economy in strong and trenchant terms:

> This Gentleman's Conduct, tho' a very common way of Management, is ridiculous as that Officer's would be, who had but few Men under his Com-

[54] *Spectator* No. 114.

[55] In his *English Comic Writers* Hazlitt calls attention, as a feature of the *Tatler* to what he describes as "antithetical style and verbal paradoxes...in which the epithet is a seeming contradiction to the substantive",—as I think in this phrase "a magnificent poverty" or "a busy idler" applied to men like Will Wimble. He mentions Burke as a frequent user of expressions of this sort, e.g. "proud submission" and "dignified obedience," and "*thinks*" they "are *first* to be found in the *Tatler*." *Op. cti.* Ev. Lib. p. 99 footnote. The *Spectator* piece quoted above is from the pen of Steele. But Hazlitt't opinion in this matter requires further examination.

> mand, and should take the Charge of an Extent of Country rather than a small Pass. To pay for, personate, and keep in, a Man's Hands a greater Estate than he really has, is of all others the most unpardonable Vanity and must in the End reduce the Man who is guilty of it to Dishonour. Yet if we look round us in any County of *Great-Britain*, we shall see many in this fatal Errour ; if that may be call'd by so soft a Name, which proceeds from a false Shame of appearing what they really are, when the contrary Behaviour would in a short Time advance them to the Condition which they pretend to.

His diagnosis of these cases is shame and fear of poverty. Shame of it drives a vain man of fortune like the hero of this story to an unreasonable waste of prodigality, while fear of poverty leads him to the other extreme of avarice, as is more fully explained in the following :

> *Laertes* and *Irus* are Neighbours, whose Ways of living are an Abomination to each other. *Irus* is moved by the Fear of Poverty, and *Laertes* by the Shame of it. Though the Motive of Action is of so near Affinity in both, and may be resolved into this, 'That to each of them Poverty is the greatest of all Evils,' yet are their Manners very widely different. Shame of Poverty makes *Laertes* launch into unnecessary Equipage, vain Expence, and lavish Entertainments ; Fear of Poverty makes *Irus* allow himself only plain Necessaries, appear without a Servant, sell his own Corn, attend his Labourers, and be himself a Labourer. Shame of Poverty makes *Laertes* go every Day a Step nearer to it : and Fear of Poverty stirs up *Irus* to make every Day some further Progress from it.

Elsewhere[56] Mr. Spectator speaks of natural wealth and artificial poverty in emphasizing the state of mind as an essential condition of "being wealthy." "Content," he says, "is equivalent to Wealth, and Luxury to Poverty ; or to give the Thought a more agreeable Turn, Content is natural Wealth, says *Socrates* ; to which I shall add, *Luxury is artificial Poverty.*" However, to continue wih *Laertes* and *Irus*, our Economist, generalizing from their cases, delivers himself of this maxim of wise husbandry :

> These different Motives produce the Excesses which Men are guilty of in the Negligence of and Provision for themselves. Usury, Stock-Jobbing, Extortion and Oppression, have their Seed in the Dread of Want[57] ; and Van-

[56] *Spectator* No. 574

[57] The vagueness of the meaning of the word "want" in this passage is unfortunate, as it seems to me unlikely that mere dread of want can, in the ordinary course of events, become the cause of such wild or violent forms of gain-pursuit as "usury, stock-jobbing, extortion and oppression." What is capable of occasioning these is not mere "dread of want," but "a violent desire of wealth," to borrow an expressive phrase used by Swift. (*Gulliver's Travels*, Pt. IV, § VI where Gulliver tells his Houyhnhnm master about human avarice.) Mandeville uses the word "want" as a synonym of "desire" and builds up on it his whole system of thought. Read the pregnant passage : "I would have taught them (the meanest Capacities), that every Defect, every Want was an Evil : and on the Multitude of those Wants depended all those mutual Services which the individual Members of a Society pay to each other : and that consequently, the greater Variety there was of Wants, the larger Number of Individuals might find their private Interest in labouring for the Good of others, and united together, compose one Body." (*Fable*, Vol. 1,. p. 465)

> ity, Riot and Prodigality from the Shame of it; But both these Excesses are infinitely below the Pursuit of a reasonable Creature. *After we have taken Care to command so much as is necessary for maintaining our selves in the Order of Men suitable to our Character, the Care of Superfluities is a Vice no less extravagant, than the Neglect of Necessaries would have been before.*[58]

Here we are confronted with a pattern of thought which might have been culled from a mediaeval book of Christian casuistry. Indeed the precept on *luxuria* or superfluities is lofty and admirable in itself, but my wonder is how it is to find lodgment in Mr. Spectator's England where it must feel woefully out of its element.[59] However, let that pass for the moment, for he is presently coming up with a bright idea which apparently contains a far greater measure of practical wisdom, the maxim of "living within your compass."

> It would methinks be no ill Maxim of Life, if...every Man would point to himself *what Sum he would resolve not to exceed*. He might by this Means cheat himself into a Tranquility on this Side of that Expectation, or convert what he should get above it to nobler Uses than his own Pleasures or Necessities. This Temper of Mind would exempt a Man from an ignorant Envy of restless Men above him, and a more inexcusable Contempt of happy Men below him. This would be living with some Compass, living with some Design; but to be eternally bewildered in Prospects of future Gain, and putting on unnecessary Armour against improbable Blows of Fortune, is a Mechanick Being, which has not good Sense for its Direction, but is carried on by a Sort of acquired Instinct towards things below our Consideration and unworthy our Esteem.

This is the economics of reasonable spending and therefore also of saving, in short, economic planning in a rude form.

To Japanese students of economics Mr. Spectator's suggestion above quoted must be reminiscent of the principle of their own rural economist, Ninomiya Sontoku, noted for his insistence on the threehold discipline[60] of

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[58] My italics.

[59] In this connection it would be instructive to trace the development of the scholastic theory of *jus extremae necessitatis* in Europe and recall the fate to which it was doomed in modern England, where the leading thinkers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, almost without exception, rejected it as dangerous thought. Richard Baxter puts up a cruel and inhuman argument against it in his *Christian Directory* (Directions against Theft and Fraud, tit. 2). Burke is rhetorical about it but sounds negative in his conclusion. (*Thoughts on Scarcity*, Complete Works in World Classics edition, Vol. vi, p. 13-14). Cobbett is probably the only notable exception to this general rule, viewing the problem as a friend of the poor. (*Poor Man's Friend*, § 55 et seq.)

[60] *Kinro, bundo* and *suijo* are integrated into a system of economy now popularly called *Hotoku Keizai*. *Kinro* stands for production, *bundo* for thrift, and *suijo* for the right use of one's resources. *Hotoku Keizai* is a mixture of economics and morality, but rationalism is one of its salient features, with *bundo* as the pivot of the whole scheme. Determination of *bundo* for each individual or collective body is a matter of calculation based on an objective survey and investigation. Mr. Spectator's proposal for setting "a sum which he would resolve not to exceed" embodies the spirit of the *bundo* principle.

kinrô, (industry), *bundo* (observing one's prescribed limit of expenditure) and *suijo* ("concession" or earmarking for future use). Of course, Sontoku's is an elaborate system of thought with a definite plan of action so that it has grown into a social movement of nation-wide dimensions. From that point of view, comparison of it with Mr. Spectator's suggestion thrown out more or less casually may not be quite relevant. Nevertheless, it is interesting to reflect that both schemes relate primarily to rural economy and find it difficult to make inroads upon an industrial or trading community. The experience of the Hotoku movement in Japan has proved this for the school of Ninomiya Sontoku, and as for Mr. Spectator, he is cautious enough to add to his proposal the following reservations:

> It is possible that the Tranquility I now enjoy at Sir Roger's may have created in me *this Way of Thinking, which is so abstracted from the common Relish of the World.*[1] But as I am now in a pleasing Arbour surrounded with a beautiful Landskip, I find no Inclination so strong as to continue in these Mansions, so remote from the ostentatious Scenes of Life.

Apparently the implication is that his rural soliloquies are not expected to find a favourable audience in the Metropolis, "a kind of Emporium for the whole Earth."

While on the subject of domestic finance, we may as well give a few more extracts from the *Spectator* on the use of wealth. The next piece[62] concerns the Christian duty of charity for people of wealth, and may be regarded as Mr. Spectator's partial answer on the question of superfluities raised a while ago. His solution here is encouragement and support of charity-schools.

> It is here in *England* come into our very Language, as a Propriety of Distinction, to say, when we speak of Persons to their Advantage, they are People of Condition. There is no Doubt but the proper Use of Riches implies that a man should exert all the good Qualities imaginable; and if we mean by a Man of Condition or Quality one, who, according to the Wealth he is Master of, shews himself just, beneficent, and charitable, that Term ought very deservedly to be had in the highest Veneration; but when Wealth is used only as it is the Support of Pomp and Luxury, to be rich is very far from being a Recommendation to Honour and Respect .....The Fellow who escaped from a Ship which struck upon a Rock in the West, and joined with the Country-People to destroy his Brother-Sailors and make her a Wreck, was Thought a most execrable Creature; but does not every Man who enjoys the Possession of what he naturally wants, and is unmindful of the unsupplied Distress of the other Men, betray the same Temper of Mind?.....But so it is, that the Consideration of Fortune has taken up all our Minds, and,..... *Poverty and Riches stand in our Imagination in the Places of Guilt and Innocence.*[63]

[61] My italics.
[62] *Spectator* No. 294
[63] My italics.

Two points stand out in this passage, a graphic description of extreme necessity and a reference to the guilt-and-innocence conception of poverty and wealth. The second point, in particular, has to do with a significant phase of English social thought on the eve of the Industrial Revolution, of which mention was made in the previous section of this article. It is said to be a characteristic of Protestant economic ethics, as contrasted with that of Catholicism, to appreciate worldly wealth as a divine gift and proportionately to deprecate poverty as a curse to fly away from.[64] Underlying this whole attitude, we are told, is the doctrine of predestination, particularly stressed by the Puritans. The guilt-and-innocence idea of wealth and poverty is identified with that doctrine, but we have already seen that Mr. Spectator himself does not subscribe to it, hence a somewhat critical tone in the above passage.

And yet, it is enlightening to know that Mr. Spectator agrees in sentiment with Dr. Snape's sermon on the Charity Schools, with an extract from which he closes his essay.

> This wise Providence has amply compensated the Disadvantages of the Poor and Indigent, in wanting many of the Conveniencies of this Life, by a more abundant Provision for their Happiness in the next. Had they been higher born, or more richly endowed, they would have wanted this Manner of Education, of which those only enjoy the Benefit, who are low enough to submit to it; where they have such Advantages without Money, and without Price, as the Rich cannot purchase with it. The Learning which is giv'n, is generally more edyfying to them, than that which is sold to others: Thus do they become more exalted in Goodness, by being depressed in Fortune, and their Poverty is, in reality, their Preferment.

This must not be thought a glorification of poverty for all and sundry. Mr. Spectator would not accept it for himself or anyone of his class. The Gospel of Poverty was exclusively for the poor, who were "divinely appointed" to their status in which they had to surpass themselves in diligence,

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[64] Literature on the economic aspects of Protestantism is plentiful in English and German, as well as other European languages. Max Weber, Troeltsch, Brentano, Schultz-Gaevernitz, Cunningham, Tawney, O'Brien, Robertson, Fanfani, Henri Sée and numerous others have contributed to the discussion of the problem. H.G. Wood explains well and succinctly, when he writes: "The reaction from the conventional praise of poverty led the Reformer and the Puritan after him to insist on the blessing of wealth. Wealth and poverty come of God's gifts, and either is to be accepted as from Him. The seventeenth-century moralists do not ignore the spiritual and moral dangers of wealth. Indeed they are most anxious to direct the man of means in the employment of his money. But they do regard the possession of wealth as something ordained of God, and in consequence they take a conservative attitude towards class distinctions and class standards of living. They do not anticipate a filling-in of the chasm between rich and poor, or even a closer approximation between the two sides of the chasm. It is assumed to be a natural and divine order that some are placed in a position to give alms and others in the necessity of receiving them." (H. G. Wood, *The Influence of the Reformation on Ideas Concerning Wealth and Property*, in *Property, its Duties and Rights*, a symposium, London, 1913, p. 148.

frugality, obedience and contentment. It was no unimportant part of the business of religious education for the lower classes to inculcate these "virtues" upon their children.[65]

From such reflections as these it is far pleasanter and more inspiring to turn to another use of wealth recommended by Mr. Spectator, viz. the planting of trees.[66] It is a happy thought of his, expressed with his unsurpassed felicity of phrase, that wealth can bequeath to posterity no finer legacy than the luxuriance of forests and gardens. He would see the country gentlemen of England, more than any other class of men, take to planting in place of "the fowls of the air and the beasts of the field," as a thing more delightful in itself, and beneficial to the public. He knows of a gentleman to whom he may point as an example in munificence of this kind. "I could mention, a Nobleman," says he, "whose Fortune has placed him in several Parts of *England*, and who has always left these visible Marks behind him, which shew he has been there: He never hired a House in his Life, without leaving all about it the Seeds of Wealth, and bestowing the Legacies on the Posterity of the Owner. Had all the Gentlemen of *England* made the same Improvements upon their Estates, our whole Country would have been at this time as one great Garden." But of course, planting has also its great economic value, from the point of view of national defence, because "the Increase of Forest-Trees does by no Means bear a Proportion to the Destruction of them, insomuch that in a few Ages the Nation may be at a loss to supply itself with Timber sufficient for the Fleets of *England*."

Mr. Spectator further finds an exemplary use of wealth in the exercise of what with Alfred Marshall he would have called "economic chivalry." The case he cites in the "City Romance" which we have discussed in Section II is given much prominence in his periodical and elicits an observation such as the following:

> In a Nation where there are so many publick Funds to be supported I know not whether he can be called a good Subject, who does not imbark some Part of his Fortune with the State to whose Vigilance he owes the Security of the whole. .....But he who Trades, besides giving the State some Part of this sort of Credit he gives his Banker, may in all the Occurrences of his Life have his Eye upon removing Want from the Door of the Industrious, and defending the unhappy upright Man from Bankrupcy. Without this Benignity, Pride or Vengeance will precipitate Man to chuse the Receipt of half his Demands from one whom he has undone, rather than the Whole from whom he has shewn Mercy. This Benignity is essen-

[65] *Cf.* Bowden, *Industrial Society in England towards the End of the Eighteenth Century*, New York, 1925, p. 279 et seq.
[66] *Spectator* No. 583.
[67] *Spectator* Nos. 248, 346 and 546.
[68] *Spectator* No. 346.

> tial to the Character of a fair Trader who designs to enjoy his Wealth with Honour and Self-Satisfaction.

Mr. Spectator rejoices at the fact that there are around him not a few generous souls possessed of the virtue of benignity ; he only regrets that he connot report on them as fully as he would like to, for fear of arousing party animosities.

Since it is an established truth with Mr. Spectator that wealth and riches are good things to have, though caution is needed for their right dispensation, it is only natural that he is deeply interested in various means of their acquisition, Commerce, Manufacture and Agriculture, not forgetting, of course, the liberal professions. His speculations on these activities are scattered all over his eight volumes but I shall not be guilty of exaggeration when I say that among them trade and industry have received by far the largest amount of consideration and probably also of space. Naturally Mr. Spectator's favourable comments on Commerce and the Merchant are to be met with everywhere. In the second Essay in introducing Sir Andrew to his readers, he gives an energetic representation of the pride and aspirations of the contemporary British merchant.

> The Person of next Consideration is Sir Andrew Freeport, a Merchant of great Eminence in the City of *London*. A Person of indefatigable Industry, strong Reason, and great Experience. His Notions of Trade are noble and generous, and (as every rich Man has usually some sly Way of Jesting, which would make no Figure were he not a rich Man) he calls the Sea the *British Common*. He is acquainted with Commerce in all its Parts, and will tell you that it is a stupid and barbarous Way to extend Dominion by Arms ; for true Power is to be got by Art and Industry. He will often argue, that if this part of our Trade were well cultivated, we should gain from one Nation ; and if another, from another. I have heard him prove, that Diligence makes more lasting Acquisitions than Valour, and that Sloth has ruined more Nations than the Sword.

The point emphasized here is Commerce as an instrument of peace among nations and as a real founder of national strength and prosperity. The writer of the above paragraph is Steele, but the same thought is echoed more fully and with no less eloquence by Addison as Mr. Spectator in his famous paper on the Royal Exchange, from which we have made elsewhere a short selection, where he says that "Trade, without enlarging the *British* Territories, has given us a kind of additional Empire." In fact, the idea of associating Commerce with peace prevailed so much during the eighteenth century that the literature of this and subsequent periods abounds in expressions of the same tenor. Take, for example, a stanza from Edward Young's ode on "The Merchant." (Strain V 26)

> Trade springs from peace, and wealth from trade,
> And power from wealth : of power is made
> The god on earth ; hail, the dove of peace !

Whose olive speaks the raging flood
Of War repressed; what's loss of blood?
War is the death of Commerce and Increase.

As regards the functions and contributions of Commerce, Mr. Spectator dwells upon them beautifully and concretely in his Royal Exchange reflections. Commerce rests upon a mutual dependence which brings together peoples in different parts of the world producing a great variety of merchandise, and this underlying condition of exchange is happily described as follows:

> Nature seems to have taken a particular Care to disseminate her Blessings among the different Regions of the World, with an Eye to this mutual Intercourse and Traffick among Mankind, that the Natives of the several Parts of the Globe might have a kind of Dependance upon one another, and be united together by their common Interest. Almost every *Degree* produces something peculiar to it. The Food often grows in one Country, and the Sauce in another. The Fruits of *Portugal* are corrected by the products of *Barbadoes*: The Infusion of a *China* Plant sweetned with the Pith of an *Indian* Cane. The *Philippick* Islands give a Flavour to our *European* Bowles. The single Dress of a Woman of Quality is often the Product of an Hundred Climates. The Muff and the Fan come together from the different Ends of the Earth. The Scarf is sent from the Torrid Zone, and the Tippet from beneath the Pole. The Brocade Petticoat rises out of the Mines of *Peru*, and the Diamond Necklace out of the Bowels of *Indostan*.

What is remarkable about this description is a world-wide view taken of the basis of everyday life such as Englishmen, more than any other people, could well boast of in the eighteenth century. The meaning of foreign trade to the English people, in particular, is further elaborated in the next paragraph.

> If we consider our own Country in its natural Prospect, without any of the Benefits and Advantages of Commerce, what a barren uncomfortable Spot of Earth falls to our Share! Natural Historians tell us, that no Fruit grows originally among us, besides Hips and Haws, Acorns and Pig-nutts, with other Delicacies of the like Nature; That our Climate of it self, and without the Assistances of Art, can make no further Advances towards a Plumb than to a Sloe, and carries an Apple to no greater a (*sic*) Perfection than a Crab: That our Melons, our Peaches, our Figs, our Apricots, and Cherries, are Strangers among us, imported in different Ages, and naturalized in our *English* Gardens: and that they would all degenerate and fall away into the Trash of our own Country, if they were wholly neglected by the Planter, and left to the Mercy of our Sun and Soil. Nor has Traffick more enriched our vegetable World than it has improved the whole Face of Nature among us. Our Ships are laden with the Harvest of every Climate: Our Tables are stored with Spices, and Oils, and Wines: Our Rooms are filled with Pyramids of *China*, and adorned with the Workmanship of *Japan*: Our Morning's-Draught comes to us from the remotest Corners of the Earth: We repair our Bodies by the Drugs of *America*, and repose our selves under *Indian* Canopies. My friend Sir Andrew calls the Vineyards of *France* our Gardens: the Spice-Islands our Hot-beds; the *Per-*

sians our Silk-Weavers, and the *Chinese* our Potters.[69]

Hence, once more in the words of Edward Young,

Trade, Britain's all, our sires sent down
With toil, blood, treasure, ages won.

When trade and commerce are found to be of such vital importance to the wealth and welfare of the British nation, the natural consequence is the high esteem in which merchants are held as "captains of industry" in the Carlylian sense of the phrase. There is ample evidence of the tendency in the literature of the period, especially in drama, e. g. the comedies of Congreve and Steele, in which merchants are given considerable prominence in one role or another. Of course, Mr. Spectator is also a great admirer of them and goes so far as to say: "For these Reasons there are not more useful Members in a Commonwealth than Merchants. They knit Mankind together in a mutual Intercourse of good Offices, distribute the Gifts of Nature, find Work for the Poor, and Wealth to the Rich, and Magnificence to the Great." But the real, full-strength defence of merchants as a class is put into the mouth of Sir Andrew when Sir Roger, his friendly opponent representing the landed interest, inadvertently lets fall a reflection upon them on the theme of Carthagian faith. What is most impressive in this defence is the London merchant's vigorous argument in favour of the principle of Numbers or what Sombart would call "das Prinzip des kalkulatorischen Denkens." The heart of Defoe, had he been at the Club with them, would have melted in joy at Sir Andrew's eloquent testimony to the very pricinple he is at so much pains to elucidate and uphold in his *Compleat English Tradesman.* Let us hear what our champion of modern economic rationalism has to tell us, but first, as to the meaning of numbers to private enterprise.

> Numbers are so much the Measure of every thing that is valuable, that it is not possible to demonstrate the Success of any Action, or the Prudence of any Undertaking, without them. I say this in Answer to what Sir Andrew is pleased to say, That little that is truly noble can be expected from one who is ever poring on his Cash-book or ballancing his Accompts. When I have my Returns from Abroad, I can tell to a Shilling by

[69] It will be seen that Mr. Spectator (Addison), while displaying in this essay some fine touches of literary style, sacrifices accuracy to rhetorical effect when he speaks of "disputes" being adjusted [on the Royal Exchange] between an Inhabitant of *Japan* and an Alderman of *London.* In 1711 no Japanese could venture out of his country, except on pain of grave penalties; how much less conceivable it is for merchants of Tokugawa Japan to have carried on business transactions on the Royal Exchange of London! Prof. Kaye, editor of *The Fable of the Bees*, Oxford University Press, 1924, refers to this essay by Addison and points out the resemblances between it and Mandeville's similar description in the *Fable*, pp. 412—3. It is his opinion that Addison here makes little attempt to deduce "economic principles" (*Op. cit.* Vol. I, p. 357, footnote), implying, presumably, that Mandeville is free from the supposed defect. It is perhaps not impossible that Mandeville, having been a reader of the *Spectator* (*Fable*, Vol. II, p. 333) and probably having written after 1711, improved on Addison's description, but "deduction of economic principles" would scarcely have suitd ethe humour of Mr. Spectator, economist as he was in another sense of the term.

> the Help of Numbers the Profit or Loss of my Adventure; but I ought also to be able to shew that I had Reason for making it, either from a reasonable Presumption that my Returns will be sufficient to answer my Expence and Hazard; and this is never to be done without the Skill of Numbers. For Instance, if I am to trade to *Turkey*, I ought beforehand to know the Demand of our Manufactures there as well as their Silks in *England*, and the customary Prices that are given for both in each Country. I ought to have a clear Knowledge of these Matters beforehand, that I may presume upon sufficient Returns to answer the Charge of the Cargo I have fitted out, the Freight and Assurance out and home, the Customs to the Queen, and the Interest of my Money, and besides these Expences a reasonable Profit to my self.

But the principle of numbers is universal and is not confined to the "Œconomy of the Merchant." Neglect of it will prove disastrous to the country gentleman as well, "unless by scorning to be the Steward, he resolves the Steward shall be the Gentleman."

> The Gentleman no more than the Merchant is able without the Help of Numbers to account for the Success of any Action, or the Prudence of any Adventure. If, for Instance, Chace is his whole Adventure, his only Returns must be the Stag's Horns in the great Hall, or the Fox's Nose upon the Stable Door. Without Doubt Sir Roger knows the full Value of these Returns; and if beforehand he had computed the Charges of the Chace, a Gentleman of his Discretion would certainly have hang'd up all his Dogs, he would never have brought back so many fine Horses to the Kennel, he would never have gone so often like a Blast over Fields of Corn. If such too had been the Conduct of all his Ancestors, he might truly have boasted at this Day that the Antiquity of his Family had never been sullied by a Trade, a Merchant had never been permitted with his whole Estate to purchase a Room for his Picture in the Gallery of de Coverleys, or to claim his Descent from the Maid of Honour. But 'tis very happy for Sir Roger that the Merchant paid so dear for his Ambition. *'Tis the Misfortune of many other Gentlemen to turn out of the Seats of their Ancestors, to make Way for such new Masters as have been more exact in their Accompts than themselves; and certainly he deserves the Estate a great deal better who has got it by his Industry, than he who has lost it by his Negligence.*[70]

[70] Defoe notices this social phenomenon in his writings, particularly in *A Plan of the English Commerce, The Compleat English Tradesman* and *The Compleat English Gentleman*. In the last-named work he records cases of great estates of ancient families passing into the hands of *nouveaux-riches* and writes, in part: "This is especially to be observ'd in the severall counties adjacent to London, where, in short, you have very few of the antient gentry left, as in the countyes of Essex, Kent, Surry, Middlesex, Hartford, etc. Take the two great countyes of Essex and Kent in particular: how few of the antient families are to be found, but the estates are possesst and the new palaces are built all by modern houses, the posterity of trades-men, merchants, soldiers, and seamen; and one particularly acquainted with both the case and with the persons assur'd me that in the two countyes of Essex and Kent only there was not one fifth part of the antient families remaining, and that he could name 200 houses of merchants and trades-men settled in those counties with immense wealth and estates," etc (*The Compleat English Gentleman*, ed. by K. D. Bülbring, p. 263). It is interesting to note that on the previous page of the same book Defoe mentions the names of "Countess Dowager of Warwick" and "Addisson"—that is, our Mr. Spectator—in the list of "noble ladyes matching with private men and hardly with gentlemen"—another manifestation of what Lamb calls "an imperfect sympathy" between Defoe and Mr. Spectator.

In the *Clandestine Marriage*, a play by Colman and Garrick, Sterling, the merchant of the play, speaking to himself, says: "let him have children by my daughter or no, I shall have his whole estate in a net for the benefit of my family.—Well thus it is that the children of citizens, who have acquired fortunes, prove persons of fashion: and thus it is, that persons of fashion who have ruined their fortunes, reduce the next generation to cits." (Act, sc. I)

There is a note of serious criticism in the Merchant's disapproval of the ignorance of numbers among the English gentlemen not excluding his friend Sir Roger de Coverley. The climax of his argument, reached in the passage I have italicized, carries with it a satire which must have touched the good knight to the quick because it lays its finger on just what was happening under his nose to many estates of country gentlemen and ancient nobility.

A few other things said by Sir Andrew in this controversy may be noted in this connection. "When a Man happens to break in Holland," he says, for one thing, "they say of him that *he has not kept true Accompts*. This Phrase, perhaps, among us would appear a soft or humorous way of speaking, but with that exact Nation it bears the highest Reproach; for a Man to be mistaken in the Calculation of his Expence, in his Ability to answer future Demands, or to be impertinently sanguine in putting his Credit to too great Adventure, are all Instances of as much Infamy, as with gayer Nations to be failing in Courage or common Honesty."

Then, in response to Sir Roger's depreciation of mercantile frugality and parsimony in contrast with the gentleman's charity and hospitality, he asserts tersely and pointedly that, while Sir Roger simply gives to his men, he places his above the necessity or obligation of his bounty by keeping them at work. As to Carthagian faith, he points out that it was a proverb of the Romans who were at war with the Carthagians, a piece of war propaganda. Suppose Mr. Spectator had lived into the present century, he might have made Sir Andrew add, "Didn't the Germans in 1914—1918 scornfully call us British people *Händler* (mercenaries) and themselves Ritter or knights? It's all war!"

Finally a word about the London merchant's retirement. The news is printed in the *Spectator* of Saturday, November 29, 1712 (No. 549), not much more than a year after we heard him hold forth so full of vim and conviction in behalf of the merchant and his mission, We know, of course, that editorial convenience is the primary cause of his unexpected and untimely retirement from business, but since Sir Andrew himself gives his reasons for the step he is taking, we must listen to him and form our own opinion of the matter accordingly. On perusal of his letter sent to the *Spectator* we find, however, that what he calls retirement is nothing but a transfer of his investments from the "Uncertainty of Stocks, Winds and Waves" to the settlement in "Substantial Acres and Tenements;" in short, he is becoming a country gentleman, and "wants to pass the remainder of his life in the enjoyment of what he has." But he is *not* going to be a country gentleman of the traditional type like Sir Roger; his is, so to speak, an *entrepreneurial* kind of country gentleman, a newcomer of this age,

of whom Adam Smith writes in terms of high praise.[71] He is full of plans and new ideas for the improvement and management of his newly-purchased estate :—

> This will give me great Opportunity of being charitable in my way, that is in setting my poor Neighbours to Work, and giving them a comfortable Subsistence out of their own Industry. My Gardens, my Fish-ponds, my Arable and Pasture Grounds shall be my several Hospitals, or rather Work-houses, in which I propose to maintain a great many indigent Persons, who are now starving in my Neighbourhood. I have got a fine Spread of improveable Lands, and in my own Thoughts am already plowing up some of them, fencing others ; planting Woods, and draining Marshes. In fine, I have my Share in the Surface of this Island, I am resolved to make it as beautiful a Spot as any in Her Majesty's Dominions ; at least there is not an Inch of it which shall not be cultivated to the best Advantage, and do its utmost for its Owner. As in my mercantile Employment I so disposed of my Affairs, that from whatever Corner of the Compass the Wind blew, it was bringing one or other of my Ships ; I hope as a Husbandman, to contrive it so, that not a Shower of Rain, or a Glimpse of Sun-shine, shall fall upon my Estate without bettering some part of it, and contributing to the Products of the Season.

All this is as may be expected of Sir Andrew Freeport, and it makes us smile to know that even now he does not forget to indulge in a polite dig at Sir Roger's old-type country gentlemen by mention of "a great many indigent Persons who are now starving in my Neighbourhood." But what follows strikes a note one does not often hear from an enterprising man of business : "I am now of Opinion that a Man of my Age may find Business enough on himself, by setting his Mind in Order, preparing it for another World, and reconciling it to the Thoughts of Death.....It will be a great Pleasure to me to say my Prayers twice a Day with Men of

[71] *Cf.* Smith, *Wealth of Nations*, Bk. III, § 4, where the following observation occurs : "Secondly, the wealth acquired by the inhabitants of cities was frequently employed in purchasing such lands as were to be sold, of which a great part would frequently be uncultivated. Merchants are commonly ambitious of becoming country gentlemen, and when they do, they are generally the best of all improvers. A merchant is accustomed to employ his money chiefly in profitable projects ; whereas a mere country gentleman is accustomed to employ it chiefly in expence. The one often sees his money go from him and return to him again with a profit : the other, when once he parts with it, very seldom expects to see any more of it. Those different habits naturally affect their temper and disposition in every sort of business. A merchant is commonly a bold ; a country gentleman, a timid undertaker. The one is not afraid to lay out at once a large capital upon the improvement of his land, when he has a probable prospect of raising the value of it in proportion to the expence. The other, if he has any capital, which is not always the case, seldom ventures to employ it in this manner. If he improves at all, it is commonly not with a capital, but with what he can save out of his annual revenue. Whoever has had the fortune to live in a mercantile town situated in an unimproved country, must have frequently observed how much more spirited the operations of merchants were in this way, than those of mere country gentlemen. The habits, besides, of order, œconomy and attention, to which mercantile business naturally forms a merchant, render him much fitter to execute, with profit and success, any project of improvement."

my Years, who all of them, as well as my self, may have their Thoughts taken up how they shall die, rather than how they shall live."

There is something of the Robinson Crusoe in our eminent London merchant turned a planter—Crusoe the colonizer on his desert island, a thoroughgoing man of will and action but firmly entrenched in his religious way of life.

IV

In the foregoing sections I have dealt with Mr. Spectator's economic thought on the somewhat higher plane of his idealism, or his conceptions of what Œconomy ought to be, rather than what it actually is. In the next two sections I propose to speak about the realistic side of his economic discussions, as much as possible relegating to the background his moralizings on the subject. Our data will now come, in greater plenty, from readers' contributions or Mr. Spectator's own observations released from the armour of his favourite classics.

The first topic I shall take up is *Indolence*, a subject of far graver significance than it looks on the surface, to an economically developing country like England immediately before and during the Industrial Revolution. The synonyms of Indolence are Sloth, Laziness, Idleness, Lack of Ambition and what not. Its antonyms are Industry, Diligence, Ingenuity, Enterprise, Initiative and like words expressive of energy and inventiveness. Put these two lists side by side, and it will readily dawn upon you on which side the preference of an industrial society naturally lies. The curse of Indolence has been persistent since the heydey of Puritanism and all through the period of rapid commercial and industrial development. Christian, in *The Pilgrim's Progress*, at the outset of his pilgrimage sees Sloth together with Simple and Presumption, "fast asleep with fetters upon their heels," all doomed to perdition. Richard Baxter's teaching is fuller and more definite: "Slothfulness and Idleness is a sin that naturally tendeth to want: and God hath cursed it to be punished with poverty. Yea, he commandeth that if any (that is able) will not work, neither should he eat, etc."[73] Bun-

[72] We may remind ourselves here that the original story of Alexander Selkirk which Defoe developed into *The Life and Surprizing Adventures of Robinson Crusoe of York, Mariner*, had provided the theme of a fine essay by Steele in *The Englishman*. Selkirk, the real hero of the most extraordinary adventure on the uninhabited island of Juan Fernandez, arrived in England in 1711, the year of the *Spectator's* publication, and Steele actually met and talked with him, embodying the result of the interview in the paper in question, in which we are told that "it was his manner to use stated hours and places for exercises of devotion, which he performed aloud, in order to keep up the faculties of speech, and to utter himself with greater energy."

[73] *A Christian Directory*. § 28, Direction 7—I.

yan and Baxter are both austere in their Puritanism. In the eighteenth century we find a gradual relaxation of that mood but not quite of the substance. We pick this poem from an anthology of the English poetry of the century.[74]

The Indolent

What self-sufficiency and false content
Benumb the senses of the indolent!
Dead to all purpose of good, or ill,
Alive alone in an *unactive will.*
His only vice in *no good action* lies,
And his sole virtue is his *want of vice.*
Business he deems too hard, trifles too easy,
And doing nothing finds himself too busy.
Silence he cannot bear, noise is distraction,
Noise kills with bustle, silence with reflection;
No want he feels,—what has he to pursue?
To him 'tis less to *suffer,* than to *do.*
The busy world's a fool, the learn'd a sot,
And his sole hope to be by all forgot:
Wealth is procur'd with toil, and kept with fear,
Knowledge by labour purchas'd costs too dear;
Friendship's a clog, and family a jest,
A wife a bad bargain at the best;
Honour a bubble, subject to a breath,
And all engagements vain since null'd by death;
Thus all the wise esteem, he can despise,
And *caring not,* 'tis he alone is wise:
Yet, all his wish possessing, finds no rest,
And only lives to know, *he never can be blest.*

But in practical life what indolence must have meant to Englishmen of this century is well expressed by Johnson when he speaks of a gentleman gradually involving his circumstances by bad management: "Wasting a fortune is evaporation by a thousand imperceptible means. If it were a stream, they'd stop it. You must speak to him. It is really miserable. Were he a gamester, it could be said he had hopes of winning. Were he a bankrupt in trade, he might have grown rich; but he has neither spirit to spend nor to spare. He does not spend fast enough to have pleasure from it. He has the crime of prodigality, and the wretchedness of parsimony. If a man is killed in a duel, he is killed as many a one has been killed; but it is a sad thing for a man to lie down and die; to bleed to death, because he has not fortitude enough to sear the wound, or even to stitch it up."[75] Impatience with this sort of mental helplessness is at the root of denunciation of indolence by many eighteenth-century writers. In-

[74] *A Collection of Poems in Six Volumes by Several Hands,* London, 1775, Vol. vi, pp. 294—5.
[75] Boswell, *Life of Johnson,* in four volumes, the third edition, revised and augmented, London, 1799, Vol. III, p. 427.

dolence to them is not quite the same thing as actual laziness in the physical sense, just as Industry is regarded by them as much more than mere diligence or a passive application to any given work.[76]

Now to Mr. Spectator. His humour, of course, is not the same as Dr. Johnson's, but his view of indolence is practically the same. Defining it as "a Stream which flows slowly on, but yet undermines the Foundation of every Virtue," he calls it "a Rust of Mind" or "the Slumber of Mind."[77] It incapacitates you for action, because "a Faculty of doing Things remarkably praise-worthy thus concealed, is of no more Use to the Owner, than a Heap of Gold to the Man who dares not use it." Again he says that "the Time we live ought not to be computed by the Number of Years, but by the Use has been made of it; thus 'tis not the Extent of Ground, but the yearly Rent which gives the Value to the Estate." All through these expressions it is quite obvious that what weighs upon Mr. Spectator's mind is the social or economic wastefulness of indolence. This only confirms my impressions gathered on other occasions, as when he writes compassionately about Will Wimble, when he is disgusted with the beggars swarming around Sir Andrew for alms, or when he amuses his readers with accounts of the "Lowngers;" it is the economic unproductiveness of these confirmed or determined idlers that really goes against his censorious grain. To say that they lack industry in the broad sense would not de strictly true to fact, real or supposed, for in order to figure or even shine in such roles as theirs sufficiently to furnish material for Mr. Spectator's speculations they cannot be devoid of a tolerable stock of industry and ingenuity. And indeed, strange to say, it is by no means against the linguistic usage of the day to speak of the industry of thieves, beggars, sharpers and such-like parasites on "the labour of their good-natured heedless neighbours." The crux of the whole matter, then, is not lack of industry as such but its misdirection or channeling it into canals of social-economic futility, which undoubtedly is at the

[76] Indolence in this sense implies lack of ambition or the spirit of industry the essence of which consists in mental alertness. The merit of having established this apt distinction between "industry" and "diligence" belongs to Mandeville who says: "Diligence and Industry are often used promiscuously, to signify the same thing, but there is a great Difference between them. A poor Wretch may want neither Diligence nor Ingenuity, be a saving Pains-taking Man, and yet without striving to mend his Circumstances remain contented with the Station he lives in; but Industry implies, besides the other Qualities, a Thirst after Gain, and an Indefatigable Desire of meliorating our Condition." (*Fable*, Vol. I, 274) Does not this cap fit the good Doctor's friend spoken of in this paragraph?

[77] *Spectator* No. 316.

[78] Gay frequently refers to the industry of thieves and pick-pockets in *The Beggar's Opera* (e. g. Act I, sc. 1), Mandeville describes the tricks of "industrious beggars" (*Fable*, pp. 291 & 293) and Addison, as Spectator, tells about the "industry and vigilance" of "the infamous Race of Propagators" or seducers of unfortunate females in Several parts of London (*Spectator* No. 203). In *Spectator* No. 611 we meet with the phrase "*industriously spightful.*" Mandeville also mentions a cunning tradesman *industriously concealing* the defects of his goods. (*Fable*, Vol. I, pp. 49—50)

core of the prevailing odium attached to indolence. When industry is directed to productive purposes, then, and then only, does it become a virtue opposed to the vice of indolence, or as it may be termed in this case, "lack of ambition."

The story, told by Mr. Spectator in No. 54, of a strange sect or club of students at Cambridge called "Lowngers" is of interest here. The maxims of this sect are, First—and this is the fundamental principle upon which their whole system is built—"that Time being an implacable Enemy to and Destroyer of all things, ought to be paid in its own Coin, and be destroyed and murdered without Mercy;" Second, "that Business was designed only for Knaves, and Study for Blockheads;" and Third, "that the Devil is at home." By practising these maxims "the elder Proficients employ themselves in inspecting *mores hominum multorum*, in getting acquainted with all the Signs and Windows in the Town." The distinguishing mark of the loungers is that they have no worldly ambition of any sort, being "satisfied with being merely Part of the Number of Mankind." Their only concern is "to get over the insupportable Labour of doing nothing."

This whole essay is a satire on indolence against gentlemen of leisure, whether of the Universities or in the *beau monde* of London. What the writer is driving at is easily read between the lines, but in treating of Will Wimble and Sir Andrew's beggars, he is far more explicit and spells it all out. After giving a full, vivid and very entertaining account of Will's character and way of life, Mr. Spectator indulges in a melancholy soliloquy on the whole situation.[79]

> After withdrawing into my Room after Dinner, I was secretly touched with Compassion towards the honest Gentleman that had dined with us; and could not but consider with a great deal of Concern, how good an Heart and such busy Hands were wholly employed in Trifles; that so much Humanity should be so little beneficial to others, so much Industry so little advantageous to himself. The same Temper of Mind and Application to Affairs might have recommended him to the public Esteem, and have raised his Fortune in another Station of Life.

Interestingly enough, Mr. Spectator's solution of this question is Commerce and Trade.

> What Good to his Country or himself might not a Trader or Merchant have done with such useful tho' ordinary Qualifications? *Will Wimble*'s is the Case of many a younger Brother of a great Family who had rather see their Children starve like Gentlemen, than thrive in a Trade or Profession that is beneath their Quality. This Humour fills several Parts of Europe with Pride and Beggary.[80] It is the Happiness of a trading Nation,

[79] *Spectator* No. 108.

[80] This fact is referred to with much acumen by Voltaire in the tenth letter in his *Lettres Philosophiques*, in which we read, in part, "Cette coutume···paraît monstreuse a des Allemands entêtés de leurs *quartiers*; ils ne sauraient concevoir que le fils d'un Pair d'Angleterre ne soit qu'un riche et puissant Bourgeois, au lieu qu'en Allemagne tout est Prince; on a vu jusqu'à trente Altesses du même nom n'ayant pour tout bien que des armoiries et de l'orgueil."

like ours, that the younger Sons, tho' uncapable of any liberal Art or Profession, may be placed in such a Way of Life, as may perhaps enable them to vie with the best of their Family : Accordingly we find several Citizens that were launched into the World with narrow Fortunes, rising by an honest Industry to greater Estates than those of their elder Brothers.[81]

The same view is expressed in Mr. Spectator's twenty-first speculation in which he says that "a well-regulated Commerce...is not to be overstocked with Hands, but, on the contrary, flourishes by Multitude and gives Employment to all its Professors," adding that "Fleets of Merchantmen are so many Squadrons of floating Shops, that vend our Wares and Manufactures in all the Markets of the World, and find out Chapmen under both the Tropicks."

Here a point of some delicacy, apparently only indirectly related to the subject of indolence, but which in fact has a real bearing upon it, arrests our attention. It is the question of education for Commerce and Trade. Mr. Spectator in the passages from which the above quotations are extracted, recommends a trader's career to Will Wimble on the assumption that he is not a bright enough scholar to pursue any of the liberal professions, and that Commerce does not require accomplishments of that high order. We have him irrevocably on record in the following statements :

It is not improbable but *Will* was formerly tried at Divinity, Law or Physick ; and that finding his Genius did not lie that Way, his Parents gave him up at length to his own Inventions : But certainly, *however improper he might have been for Studies of a higher Nature,*[82] *he was perfectly well turned for the Occupations of Trade and Commerce.*

The next paragraph is hardly more flattering to Trade and Commerce as intellectual activities.

It is the great Advantage of a trading Nation, that there are very few in it *so dull and heavy,* who may not be in Stations of Life which may give them an Opportunity of making their Fortunes. A well-regulated Commerce is not, like Law, Physick, or Divinity, to be over-stocked with Hands.

This is hardly fair play to Sir Andrew Freeport who ought to have been given a hearing on this to him vital problem of commercial education. However, it would be well for us to recall that this kind of thought has its root deep even in English history, so that Thomas Fuller, discussing the schoolmaster in the seventeenth century and classifying scholars into four categories, accord-

[81] Defoe in *The Compleat English Gentleman* : "There is also another thing not much thought of in this case (*scil.* rise of bourgeois fortunes), which however assists to establish these modern houses ; viz. since trade, by the encrease and magnitude of our commerce in general, raises so many families to fortunes and estates, abundance of our antient gentry have not thought it below them to place out their younger sons in the families of merchants and overgrown tradesmen, and so to mingle not the blood, but the name also of the gentry with that of the mechanick, breeding them up to business and getting of money, as what they esteem no way unworthy their character or family." (*Op. cit.* p. 264)

[82] My italics.

ing to native talent and deligence, explains the fourth as follows :[83]

> Those that are invincibly dull, and negligent also. Correction may reform the latter, not amend the former. All the whetting in the world can never set a razor's edge on that which hath no steel in it. Such boys he (the schoolmaster) consigneth over to other professions. Shipwrights and boat-makers will choose those crooked pieces of timber which other carpenters refuse. *Those may make excellent merchants and mechanics which will not serve for scholars.*[84]

To return to indolence, it may be said, by way of conclusion, that Mr. Spectator has nothing good at all to say about it, even when he makes merry over the whims and fancies of the Loungers' Club. Probably he and his age did not find it in themselves to "loafe and invite their souls," as Whitman loafed and invited his a century later. Nay, in our own century, we still encounter such thoughts as the following in the *Fragments* of Alfred Marshall :

> Work is not a punishment for fault : it is a necessity for the formation of character and, therefore, for progress. (*Memorials of Alfred Marshall*, p. 367)
>
> Effort is essential to us ; therefore, unless we are to be transformed in nature (as well as faculty), there must be something in heaven that we can accomplish, is worthy of accomplishment, and requires effort...These considerations seem to point to the conclusion that the old Anglo-saxon ideal of heaven (as a place where the "hunting grounds" are nobler in scope and character than those of this earth) is more true to the fundamentals of human nature than Asiatic, or even semi-Asiatic, conceptions of it. (*ibid.*)

But it was reserved for Bertrand Russell, among others, to deplore, from the humanist point of view, absorption of the whole man in business, the machine and technology which tends to be his inevitable fate under modern industrialism ; Russell seems almost to envy China her Taoism alive with humanistic ideals of Laotze which an eighteenth-century Englishman might have called the Gospel of Indolence. This is indeed a far cry from Mr. Spectator ![85]

My next theme is love of money, because it is somehow a natural sequel to the preceding one, desire for pecuniary gain having always and

[83] From *The Holy State and the Profane State*, 1642. This is quoted from *The Good Schoolmaster*, an extract of the same book, in *A Century of English Essays*, Ev. Lib. p. 25.

[84] My italics.

[85] Cf. "*The problem of China*," "*Prospects of Industrial Civilization*" and particularly "*In Praise of Idleness*". In the first essay contained in this last-named book the author confesses that as a youth he was consistently taught to cultivate the virtue of work and avoid the vice of idleness. He writes : "Like most of my generation, I was brought up on the saying : 'Satan finds some mischief still for idle hands to do.' Being a highly virtuous child, I believed all that I was told, and acquired a conscience which has kept me working hard down to the present moment. But although my conscience has controlled my *actions*, my *opinions* have undergone a revolution." (*op. cit.* p. 1) Then about the idleness of European landowners, he says, "Unfortunately their idleness is only rendered possible by the industry of others ; indeed their desire for comfortable idleness is historically the source of the whole gospel of work." (p. 13)

in all places served as a powerful antidote to indolence. Besides, there seems to have existed in early modern England a peculiar combination of historical circumstances which made a strong appeal to that human passion as a spur to social progress and a secret spring-head of national prosperity. In the eighteenth century English society found itself very largely, if not completely, freed from the strait-jacket of mediaeval casuistry against *immoderatus amor habendi vel argenti.* Some even went so far as to propound the startling formula: "private vices, public benefits," making love of money typical of the so-called "private vices."[86] Such being the atmosphere of the age, it seems no wonder that Mr. Spectator invites his readers to send in essays on money, a subject of universal appeal to them. (No. 442) The letter printed in No. 450 over the signature of Ephraim Weed is a response to his invitation, but in fact, a satirical piece written by Mr. Spectator himself.

Mr. Spectator takes for the motto of his Ephraim Weed letter words from the Epistles of Horace,

Quaerenda pecunia primum est, Virtus post nummos,

which mean that your first business is to get money and pursuit of virtue comes only after that. But what was denounced as an abominable reversal of values in Augustan Rome becomes no rare practice in Augustan England, all the moral essays of Pope notwithstanding. Ephraim Weed calls himself a tradesman set up in business in 1660, and who, all through a continuous series of misfortunes that befell him in consequence of the plague and fire of London, has pushed his way to success and fortune. He finds the secret of all this in his insatiable love of money. But love of money, he thinks, is not confined to merchants and tradesmen, for

> All Men, through different Paths, make at the common thing, Mony; it is to her we owe the Politician, the Merchant, and the Lawyer; nay, to be frank with you, I believe also we are beholden for our *Spectator*. I am apt to think, that could we look into our own Hearts, we should see Mony ingraved in them in more lively and moving Characters than Self-Preservation; for who can reflect upon the Merchant hoisting Sail in a doubtful Pursuit of her, and all Mankind sacrificing their Quiet to her, but most perceive that the Characters of Self-Preservation (which were doubtless originally the brightest) sullied, if not wholly defaced; and that those of Mony (which at first was only valuable as a Means to Security) are of late so brightened, that the Characters of Self-Preservation, like a less Light by a greater, are become almost imperceptible? Thus has Mony got the Upper Hand of what all Mankind formerly thought most dear, viz. Security; and

[86] This famous thesis of Mandeville, while raising a storm of opposition among moralists, neverthless has met, at least in substance, with the approval of a large number of impartial thinkers, including Adam Smith and Samuel Johnson. Johnson, in particular, recalls having read *The Fable of the Bees* in his youth and had "his views opened into real life very much." (Boswell, Vol. III, p. 314)

> I wish I could say she had here put a Stop to her Victories; but, alas! common Honesty fell a Sacrifice to her. This is the Way Scholastick Men talk of the great Good in the World; but I, a Tradesman, shall give you another Account of this Matter from the plain Narrative of my own Life.

This introduces the interesting life-story, full of extraordinary events and experiences, of an imaginary tobacco-merchant. Although it is no more than a story or fiction, it is touched with the same realistic strokes as one finds in *Robinson Crusoe* and other stories of this period. Both the style and the details given heighten the effect of the illusion.

Ephraim Weed began the world with a modest fortune, but by application soon arrived at "a plumb" or £100,000. In the plague of 1665 he lost his wife and two children but quickly recovered from the affliction by reflecting "how that she and her Children having been no great Expence to me, the best Part of her Fortune was still left; that my Charge being reduced to my self, a Journeyman, and a Maid, I might live far cheaper than before; and that being now a childless Widower, I might perhaps marry a no less deserving Woman, and with a much better Fortune than she brought, which was £800." His view of the difference of the rich and the poor in bearing family losses is also remarkable: namely, that rich people bore them much better than the poor who "having little or nothing beforehand and living from Hand to Mouth, placed the whole Comfort and Satisfaction of their Lives in their Wives and Children, and were therefore inconsolable." The difference, thus comes from economic causes, according to Ephraim Weed. No less remarkable is his narrative of the great fire of 1666:

> I did not stand gazing on the Ruins of our noble Metropolis; I did not shake my Head, wring my Hands, sigh and shed Tears; I considered with myself what could this avail; I fell a plodding what Advantages might be made of the ready Cash I had, and immediately bethought myself that wonderful Penny-worths might be bought of the Goods that were saved out of the Fire. In short, with about 2000 *l.* and a little Credit, I bought as much Tobacco as raised my Estate to the value of 10000 *l.*

But what did the shrewd merchant do immediately after this?

> *I then looked on the Ashes of our great City, and the Misery of its late Inhabitants, as an Effect of the just Wrath and Indignation of Heaven towards a sinful and perverse People.*[87]

What he tells of his subsequent domestically unhappy, but economically profitable, marriages is all of a piece with the rest of the story, as he records that he found that he had been a gainer by his marriages and the

[87] I think this sentence is a fine stroke of literary craftsmanship on the part of Mr. Spectator. The whole Ephraim Weed letter reminds me of many such pieces written by Saikaku (1642—93) on merchants and their ways of life in the *Genroku* period, towards the end of the seventeenth century. The artistry of Saikaku's realistic sketches is an achievement rarely to be met with in the literature of any country.

damages granted him by the abuses of his bed, "(all Charges deducted) eight thousand three hundred Pounds within a Trifle."

Ephraim Weed's justification of his own consistently economic motives rests on moral and religious grounds.[88] He points out the "good effects of the love of money on the lives of men towards rendering them honest, sober and religious." The first point, on which the reverse argument is also quite possible, is explained by him as follows:

> When I was a young Man, I had a Mind to make the best of my Wits, and over-reached a Country Chap in a Parcel of unsound Goods; to whom, upon his upbraiding, and threatening to expose me for it, I returned the Equivalent of his Loss; and upon his Advice, wherein he clearly demonstrated the Folly of such Artifices, which can never end but in Shame, and the Ruin of all Correspondence, I never after transgressed.

And he follows this up with a cynical question:

> Can your Courtiers, who take Bribes, or your Lawyers or Physicians in their Practice, or even the Divines who meddle in worldly Affairs, boast of making but one Slip in their Lives, and of such a thorough and lasting Reformation?

Likewise as regards relations between the love of money and religion, he has some pointed remasks to make:

> I have ever been a constant Churchman, both Forenoons and Afternoons on *Sundays*, never forgetting to be thankful for any Gain or Advantage I had had that Day; and on *Saturday* Nights, upon casting up my Accounts, I always was grateful for the Sum of my Week's Profits, and at *Christmas* for that of the whole Year. It is true, perhaps, that my Devotion has not been the most fervent; which, I think, ought to be imputed to the Evenness and Sedateness of my Temper, which never would admit of any Impetuosities of any Sort: And I can remember that in my Youth and Prime of Manhood, when my Blood ran brisker, I took greater Pleasure in Religious Exercises than at present, or many Years past, and that my Devotion sensibly declined as Age, which is dull and unwieldy, came upon me.

Evidently the whole picture is overdrawn so as to present a caricature of a greedy merchant "on the make," but it is not, on that account, without some touches of reality.

References to love of money are numerous and frequent in the *Spectator*. Notable among them, besides the letter above discussed, are, for example, stories of European adventurers in quest of gold and fortune. The strange

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[88] Compare this with Bailey's half casuistic, half realistic explanation of the proverb, "Money makes the Mare to go.' 'viz. "This Proverb is a good Lesson of *Industry* in our Calling, and *Frugality* in our Expences, intimating its Usefulness. in that it *cloath*s the Naked, *feed*s the Hungry, and buys a Crutch for the Cripple···In a Word, it carries all the Business upon Earth, and there is nothing to be done without it in any Affair, either of Necessity or Convenience; and by its Assistance we may almost work Miracles···Money answers all things." (*Dictionary*, under "Money").

romance of Inkle and Yarico which Mr. Spectator writes about in No. 11 turns upon the same theme contrasting the primitive innocence of an American Indian maid with the callousness of a thoroughbred utilitarian, Thomas Inkle, a twenty-year-old son of an eminent citizen of London. It is an old story[89] retouched by Mr. Spectator who tells it as a counter version of the celebrated story of the Ephesian Woman. But here again he brings into sharp focuss the young London merchant's ingrained love of money which makes him not only forsake his bride to whom in his shipwreck he owes his very life, but sell her away as a slave. The dénouement of the story is given by Mr. Spectator in this way :

> To be short, Mr. *Thomas Inkle*, now coming into *English* Territories, began seriously to reflect upon his Loss of Time, and to weigh with himself how many Days Interest of his Money he had lost during his Stay with *Yarico*. This Thought made the young Man very pensive, and careful what Account he should be able to give his Friends of the Voyage. Upon which Considerations, the prudent and frugal young Man sold *Yarico* to a *Barbadian* Merchant; notwithstanding that the poor Girl, to incline him to commiserate her Condition, told him that she was with Child by him : But he only made use of that Information, to rise in his Demands upon the Purchaser.

Somewhat along the same line Mr. Spectator in his essay No. 56 speaks of the vision of an American Indian in which he makes a descent into the great repository of souls where he espies "several Molton Seas of Gold" in which are "plunged the Souls of barbarous Europeans, who put to the Sword so many Thousands of poor Indians for the sake of that precious Metal."[90]

Love of money is such a fertile and perennial topic of discussion that it is impossible to introduce here all the materials, raw and finished, that Mr. Spectator has given us on it in the eight volumes of his periodical. Those on two items which, for considerations of space, I have had to refrain from using, or using more fully than I have done, for this paper, I keenly regret, as they are interesting and valuable as early eighteenth-century popular expressions of the problems concerned, viz. Marriage for Money or Conditions of the Marriage Market and "Upstarts" or "Men of Yesterday," as Mr. Spectator so tellingly calls them. On the former there is an entertaining account of Persian fairs and Chinese markets for

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[89] "The story of Inkle and Yarico" was so popular in the eighteenth century that George Colman (1762—1836), son of the well-known playwright of the same name, adapted it for the stage under the title, *Inkle and Yarico*. Charles Lamb prefixed his essay on *The Superannuated Men* with a quotation from *Inkle and Yarico*, viz. "A Clerk I was in London gay." Lamb, however, gives it erroneously as from O'Keefe. (See *Charles Lamb and Elia*, edited by J. E. Morpurgo, Penguin Books, p. 69)

[90] *Cf.* Pope, *An Essay on Man*, I. 107—8. "Where slaves once more their native land behold, / No friends torment, no Christians thirst for gold."

marriageable women ending in an appropriate moral, as from the pen of Honeycomb. (*Spectator* No. 510) On the latter we have a typically Spectatorial piece in the letter of "John Enville, Knt." (No. 299), which combines in one text both the theme of an upstart and that of a marriage of pecuniary convenience. If you are, by any chance, interested in that most delicate problem of domestic finance and perhaps felicity, the appropriation of "Pin-Money," the place where you may find enlightenment, both actual and historical, is *Spectator* No. 295. I wish I could have thrown that in for good measure.

After love of money we may now turn, quite naturally, to the "Art of Growing Rich," an attractive subject for everybody in Mr. Spectator's day—and ours, too. This is discussed in No. 283 in charge of Budgell as Mr. Spectator who opens it with a general consideration of wealth. He agrees with Lucian who "rallies the Philosophers of his Time who could not agree whether they should admit *Riches* into the Number of real Goods." As for Mr. Spectator himself,

> I am to believe, that as the World grew more polite, the rigid Doctrines of the first (the Professors of the severer Sects) were wholly discarded; and I do not find any one so hardy at present, as to deny that there are very great Advantages in the Enjoyment of a plentiful Fortune. Indeed the best and wisest of Men, tho' they may possibly despise a good Part of those Things which the World calls Pleasures, can, I think, hardly be insensible of that Weight and Dignity which a moderate Share of Wealth adds to their Characters, Counsels and Actions.

This, of course, is a common-sense view of the matter and may be considered a fairly representative idea of wealth prevailing at this time. Then he goes on to answer the popular complaint that rich men are given preference in various professions and trades, by saying: "Supposing both equal in their natural Integrity, I ought, in common Prudence, to fear foul Play from an indigent Person, rather than from one whose Circumstances seem to have placed him above the bare Temptation of Money." The historical example which he cites in illustration of his contention has not lost its validity even in our own day.

> This Reason also makes the Commonwealth regard her richest Subjects, as those who are most concerned for her Quiet and Interest, and consequently fitted to be entrusted with her highest Employments. On the contrary, *Cataline's* Saying to those Men of desperate Fortunes, who applyed themselves to him, and of whom he afterwards composed his Army, that

[91] As usual, Bailey has an interesting comment to make upon "upstarts" in his *Dictionary*: "For let a Man get never so much Money to buy an *Estate*, he cannot purchase one Grain of GENTLLITY with it; but will remain JACK in the Proverb (*scil.* "Jack will never make a Gentleman") still, without *Learning*, *Virtue*, and *Wisdom*, to *inrich* the Faculties of his Mind, to *enhance* the Glory of his Wealth, and to ennoble his Blood,···a *Gentleman* at Second-hand only, or a vain-glorious *Upstart*." (See under "Gentleman")

> *They had nothing to hope for but a civil War*,[92] was too true not to make the Impressions he desired.

How, then, can we accumulate enough wealth to deserve preferment in public offices or distinction in social life? What, in other words, is the way to wealth? Mr. Spectator recommends four infallible methods towards attaining this end, viz. Thrift, Diligence, Method, and Genius. The first two are self-evident and the third, a near-relative of Punctuality, stands for a methodical habit in the disposition of business matters. But the most dynamic of all is the fourth and last condition—Genius. But what is Genius? Certainly not that "native intellectual power of an exalted type"[93] which we today associate with a Shakespeare, an Einstein, perhaps a G. B. S. or any such *rara avis* in different fields of human endeavour. Here Mr. Spectator seems merely to mean Ingenuity, Initiative or Power of Invention, as he writes:

> Tho' the Ways of getting Money were long since very numerous; and tho' so many new ones have been found out of late Years, there is certainly still remaining a large Field for Invention, that *a Man of indifferent Head* might easily sit down and draw up such a Plan of Conduct and Support of his Life, as was yet never once thought of. We daily see Methods put in Practice by *hungry and ingenious Men*,[94] which demonstrate the Power of Invention in this Particular.

And he illustrates this with a number of examples which are all in a minor key, being taken from casual and more or less trivial cases.

Thus we can say with the N. E. D. that "Genius" in Mr. Spectator's day was still pedestrian and attainable even for "a man of indifferent mind," and was not at all what we call in Japanese "tensai." But the interesting point to an economic historian is that this homely "genius" had a definite part to play in the dawn or early period of the Industrial Revolution. In England most of the inventors or improvers of industrial technique or process in the eighteenth century were not eminent scientists or university professors, but common men of practical experience or unusual ingenuity, or in most cases, of both. At all events, it is not at all improper that Mr. Spectator, an eighteenth-century Englishman and an Œconomist into the bargain, should put so much emphasis upon private initiative under the name of "Genius." Nor must we forget that his was the "projecting age" which gave free rein to all sorts of new ideas and designs.

Assuming that such is undeniably the case, I cannot yet help feeling that Mr. Spectator is not wholly unmindful of this thing called "Genius" that we of this century make so much of. If he in 1711 had known this its modern sense, I make no doubt whatever that he would have been only

[92] My italics.
[93] *Cf.* N. E. D. under *Genius*, sense 5, particularly regarding difference between "genius" and "talent."
[94] My italics.

too glad to hit his nail on the head with a simple and unequivocal "genius" (*tensai*) in the following conclusion of his:

> .....what has been said is only intended for Persons in the common Ways of Thriving, and is not designed for those men who from low Beginnings push themselves up to the Top of States, and the most considerable Figures in Life. My Maxim of *Saving* is not designed for such as these, since Nothing is more usual than for *Thrift* to disappoint the Ends of *Ambition*, it being almost impossible that the Mind should be intent upon Trifles, while it is at the same Time forming some great Design.
>
> I may therefore compare these Men to a great Poet, who, as *Longinus* says, while he is full of the most magnificent Ideas, is not always at leisure to mind the little Beauties and Niceties of his Art.
>
> I would however have all my Readers take great Care how they mistake themselves for uncommon *Genius's*, and Men above Rule, since it is very easie for them to be deceived in this Particular.

So it is these men of a heroic mould, "men above rule," who never pinch and scrape but conjure up, so to speak, enormous, even fabulous, wealth with their native genius for great undertakings. They are Olympians in the Business World.

In this same interesting paper Mr. Spectator gives it as his opinion that trade is not only advantageous to the Commonwealth in general but as the most natural and likely method of making a man's fortune, "having observed since my being a Spectator in the World, greater Estates got above *Change*, than at *Whitehall* or St. *James's*." This remark gives me a clue to my next subject of discussion, which shall be Business as a Method of Money-making or Growing Rich.

On this head, a variety of thoughts crowd in on my mind. Fortunately we have a letter contributed to the *Spectator* (No. 509) by a Hezekiah Thrift (Steele) on the "Business of Money and Advancement of Gain," and which I hope will serve as a suitable "starter." In introducing the letter Mr. Spectator explains that his correspondent's message "delivered in his own homely Maxims and a Kind of proverbial Simplicity" deserves general attention, and that its "Sort of Learning has raised more Estates than ever were, or will be, from Attention to *Virgil*, *Horace*, *Tully*, *Seneca*, *Plutarch*, or any of the rest" who, to this worthy citizen, are ingenious but unprofitable writers.

According to Ezekiah Thrift, the man proper for the business of money and advancement of gain, is a person of a sedate plain good Understanding, not apt to go out of his Way, but so behaving himself at home, that Business may come to him." Unlike his modern counterpart, or unlike Mr. Spectator himself, he must not be a gad-about, but must fight his battles in his home waters. It is to the glory of that valuable citizen, Sir William Turner, that posterity has cherished his most excellent rule, "Keep your

Shop and your Shop will keep you." The keynote of this maxim is steadiness, but steadiness is not always compatible with brilliance of genius. Thrift puts it thus: "It must be confessed that if a Man of a great Genius could add Steadiness to his Vivacities, or substitute slower Men of Fidelity to transact the methodical Part of his Affairs, such a one would outstrip the rest of the World: *But Business and Trade is not to be managed by the same Heads which write Poetry, and make Plans for the Conduct of Life in general.*"[95]

The reason why men of wits and learning do not become rich is, so says our friend, because they despise wealth, or at least do not value it enough to make it an object of their attention. But this would be fatal to merchants and tradesmen, for thereby they would lose their credit which corresponds to honour, reputation, fame or glory in other sorts of men. Consequently "Don't despise money or treat it too lightly—Always make it your serious goal to strive after" is his second maxim. More than that, he would like Mr. Spectator to speculate on such proverbs as "Many a little makes a mickle," "A penny saved is a penny got," "Penny wise and Pound foolish," "It is need that makes the old wife trot."

Far more instructive than all these, however, is Thrift's interpretation of the proverbial phrase "Hobson's choice." Contrary to the popular notion of it as meaning "a choice with no alternative," usually imposed on you out of dire necessity, he would see in it an enforement of business ethics involving a fair and non-discriminatory treatment of all customers. In plain English the maxim means, "There is Plenty, but you must make such a Choice, as not to hurt another who is to come after you." By this policy Mr. Tobias (or Thomas) Hobson (1544—1631), a liveryman at Cambridge won such confidence among the scholars of that university who rid his horses, each hiring the one that happened to be nearest the stable door, that his business prospered exceedingly. This is the final advice of our correspondent:

"This memorable Man stands drawn in Fresco at an Inn (which he used) in Bishopsgate-street, with an hundred Pound Bag under his Arm, with this Inscription upon the said Bag,

The fruitful Mother of an hundred more.

Whatever Tradesman will try the Experiment, and begin the Day after

[95] My italics. It looks as though here Mr. Spectator was laughing in his sleeve at his own expense.

[96] On the importance of credit to merchants Mr. Spectator expresses some fine ideas in his paper No. 218. This is a specimen of them: "The Merit of the Merchant is above that of all other Subjects; for while he is untouched in his Credit, his Hand-writing is a more portable Coin for the Service of his fellow-Citizens, and his Word the Gold of *Ophir* to the Country wherein he resides."

you publish this my Discourse to treat his Customers all alike, and all reasonably and honestly, I will ensure him the same Success."

Mr. Spectator's 546th paper is also concerned with the same problem of business management. He begins with a significant prelude:

> It gives me very great Scandal to observe where-ever I go, how much Skill, in buying all manner of Goods, there is necessary to defend your self from being cheated in whatever you see exposed to Sale.

Then after a sling or two at the impudence of some English writers for the stage who make unacknowledged borrowings from foreign authors, he continues:

> But I intended to give the Lecture of this Day upon the common and prostituted Behaviour of Traders in ordinary Commerce. The Philosopher[97] makes it a Rule of Trade, that your Profit ought to be the common Profit; and it is unjust to make any Step towards Gain, wherein the Gain of even those to whom you sell is not also consulted. A Man may deceive himself if he thinks fit, but he is no better than a Cheat who sells any thing without telling the Exceptions against it, as well as what is to be said to its Advantage.[98] The scandalous Abuse of Language and hardening of Conscience which may be observed every Day in going from one Place to another, is what makes a whole City to an unprejudiced Eye a Den of Thieve.[99]

In this "Den of thieves," however, it is Mr. Spectator's great pleasure to find a shop so well managed as that of John Moreton, the unfortunate merchant in the late "City Romance."[100] It will be recalled that he was narrowly saved from the shame of bankruptcy by the timely generosity of Sir William Scawen. The story spoke as well for the beneficiary of that generosity as for its dispenser, for no merchant would help a fellow merchant with so vast a sum unless he was deserving of it in every particular. But there is a postscript to that story or romance. Mr. Moreton, after his re-start in business with the fund supplied by Sir William, initiated the custom of cash sales, eliminating credit altogether. Of course,

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[97] Aristotle. *Politics*, § 3, n. 11 et seq.; Thomas, *Summa Theologica* II—IIae, Q. 77, art. 1.

[98] Mandeville, *Fable*, Remark (B): "This, I confess, is but a very indifferent Compliment to all the Trading Part of the People···To pass by the innumerable Artifices, by which Buyers and Sellers out-wit one another that are daily allowed of and practised among the fairest of Dealers, shew me the Tradesman that has always discover'd the Defects of his Goods to those that cheapen'd them; nay, where will you find one that has not at one time or other industriously conceal'd them, to the Detriment of the Buyer? Where is the Merchant that has never against his Conscience extoll'd his Wares beyond their Worth, to make them go off the better?"

[99] "We live indeed in a thieving, cheating, and plundering Age; *Cozening* is become a topping Trade, only we have got a genteeler way of stealing now than only to take a Man's Horse from under him on the Highway, and a little loose Money out of his Pocket; our *Rapparees* are Men of better Breeding and Fashion, and scorn to play at such small Game, they sweep away a noble Estate with one slight Brush, and bad both the *Gallows* and *House-Pond* Defiance." (Bailey, *Dictionary*, under "To Steal")

[100] *Spectator* No. 248.

it was a virtue he made of necessity in his straitened circumstances, but there were obvious advantages in this new method. Mr. Spectator reports the news and makes a wise observation on the beauty of business on a strictly cash basis.

> The Misfortune of this citizen is like to prove of a very general Advantage to those who shall deal with him hereafter : For the Stock with which he now sets up being the Loan of his Friends, he cannot expose that to the Hazards of giving Credit, but enters into a Ready-Mony Trade, by which Means he will both buy and sell the best and the cheapest. He imposes upon himself a Rule of affixing the Value of each Piece he sells to the Piece it self ; so that the most ignorant Servant or Child will be as good a Buyer at his Shop as the most skillful in the Trade. For all which you have all his Hopes and Fortune for your Security. To encourage Dealing after this Way, there is not only the avoiding the most infamous Guilt in ordinary Bartering ; but this Observation, That he who buys with ready Mony saves as much to his Family, as the State exacts out of his Land for the Security and Service of his Country ; that is to say, in plain *English*, Sixteen will do as much as Twenty Shillings.

We may count, among other ways to wealth, the above principle through honest trading and non-discriminatory treatment of customers in the matter of prices.

V

Success in business depends much upon effective advertisement. The original folio *Spectator* carried in each number a large assortment of interesting advertisements,[101] so that one could profitably make a special study of that feature of the periodical. Needless to say, Mr. Spectator is fully aware of the value of "ads" for business and it is strange that he has not speculated on the art of advertising. I believe that he is an excellent advertiser for his own paper, for not long after the price of his paper was raised from three half-pence to two pence owing to the tax on papers, he addressed his readers those exquisite, delightfully witty and tactfully persuasive words to solicit continuance of their patronage which serve as a piece of superb advertisement. They are contained in No. 488 and headed with a happily apposite quotation from Horace's *Satires* which in

[101] Lewis, *The Advertisements of the Spectator*, 1909. An Advertisement like the following, inserted after essay No. 187, is interesting to students of eighteenth-century customs and manners :

> ADVERTISEMENT
>
> Mr. Sly, Haberdasher of Hats at the Corner of Devereux Court in the Strand, gives Notice, that he has prepared very neat Hats, Rubbers and Brushes, for the Use of young Tradesmen in their last Year of Apprenticeship, at reasonable Prices.

itself seems to me a fine initial hit: *Quanti emptae? Parvo. Quanti ergo? Octo assibus.* (What doth it cost? Not much, upon my word. How much, pray? Why, two pence. Two pence! O Lord! Creech) But what he says in the essay itself and of course, how he says it, reveal Addison at his Spectatorial best.

He suggests two expedients to cope with the situation. First, that his readers retrench any smallest particular in their ordinary expenses and squeese out the extra half penny needed for the new *Spectator*. "Let a Lady," he says, "sacrifice a single Ribband to her Morning Studies, and it will be sufficient: Let a Family burn but a Candle a Night less than the usual Number, and they may take in the *Spectator* without detriment to their private Affairs." The second suggestion is more reasonable as a business proposition, and beautifully expressed:

> In the next Place, if my Readers will not go to the Price of buying my Papers by Retail, let them have Patience, and they may buy them in the Lump, without the Burthen of a Tax upon them. My Speculations, when they are sold single, like Cherries upon the Stick, are Delights for the Rich and Wealthy; after some time they come to Market in greater Quantities and are every ordinary Man's Money. The Truth of it is, they have a certain Flavour at their first Appearance, from several accidental Circumstances of Time, Place and Person, which they may lose if they are not taken early; but in this Case every Reader is to consider, whether it is not better for him to be half a Year behind Hand with the fashionable and Polite Part of the World, than to strain himself beyond his Circumstances.

Why not, indeed? The reason is very tempting:

> My Bookseller has now about Ten Thousand of the Third and Fourth Volumes, which he is ready to publish, having already disposed of as large an Edition both of first and second Volume. As he is a Person whose Head is very well turned to his Business, he thinks they would be a very proper Present to be made to Persons at Christenings, Marriages, visiting Days, and the like joyful Solemnities, as several other Books are frequently given at Funerals. He has printed them in such a little portable Volume, that many of them may be rang'd together upon a single Plate, and is of Opinion, that a Salver of *Spectators* would be as acceptable an Entertainment to the Ladies, as a Salver of Sweetmeats.

This is Mr. Spectator as his own advertiser. Let us now turn to him as a critic of those sign-posts before tradesmen's doors which are another form of advertisement. In No. 28 an anonymous correspondent (Addison himself) sends Mr. Spectator a letter complaining of the absurdities hung out upon the sign-posts of London. He would see barbarity driven out of the Metropolis and writes a "Satyr upon Projectors in general and a lively Picture of the whole Art of Modern Criticism." The first thing he complains of is the monstrosity of some sign-posts:

> Our Streets are filled with blue Boars, black Swans, and red Lions; not to mention flying Pigs, and Hogs in Armour, with many other Creatures

more extraordinary than any in the Desarts of *Africk*. Strange! that one who has all the Birds and Beasts in Nature to chuse out of, should live at the Sign of an *Ens Rationis*!

The second complaint has to do with unnatural and incongruous combinations in designs, such as "the Bell and the Neats-Tongue," "the Dog and the Gridion." Under this abnormality falls a combination of two different signs into one which is misleading and productive of undesirable effects.

> ...it is usual for a young Tradesman, at his first setting up, to add to his own Sign that of the Master whom he serv'd; as the Husband after Marriage, gives a Place to his Mistress's Arms in his own Coat. This I take to have given Rise to many of those Absurdities which are committed over our Heads; ..... I would therefore establish certain Rules, for the determining how far one Tradesman may give the Sign of another, and in what Cases he may be allowed to quarter it with his own.

In the third place the correspondent desires a more truthful representation of the wares actually sold at the shop in question:

> What can be more inconsistent, than to see a Bawd at the Sign of the Angel, or a Taylor at the Lion? A Cook should not live at the Boot, nor a Shoemaker at the roasted Pig; and yet, for want of this Regulation, I have seen a Goat set up before the Door of a Perfumer, and the *French* King's Head at a Sword-Cutler's.

There are also some tell-tale sign-posts or rather coats-of-arms which give away gentlemen descended from mercantile ancestors.

> An Ingenious Foreigner observes, that several of those Gentlemen who value themselves upon their Families, and over-look such as are bred to Trade, bear the Tools of their Forefathers in their Coats of Arms. I will not examine how true this is in Fact: But though it may not be necessary for Posterity thus to set up the Sign of their Forefathers; I think it highly proper for those who actually profess the Trade, to show some such Marks of it before their Doors.

The moral of it all is "Avoid misrepresentation in all cases." The popular Chinese phrase describing unfair representations in commercial dealings is a sign-post metaphor which must suit Mr. Spectator: "Hang out a sheep's head and sell dog-flesh." It is more vivid and graphic than its English counterpart, "Cry up wine and sell vinegar."

Not altogether unrelated to the question of tradesmen's sign-posts is the general subject of "appearance" and particularuy what it means to merchants. Mr. Spectator takes it up in connection with their dress in a letter written in the name of a correspondent (No. 360). He thinks it permissible for merchants, especially young ones, to dress slightly above themselves for the sake of an appearance of decency.

> It must be allowed, that any young Fellow that affects to dress and appear genteely, might by artificial Management save ten Pound a Year; as instead of fine Holland he might mourn in Sack-cloath, and in other

> particulars be proportionably shabby : But of what great Service would this Sum be to avert any Misfortune, whilst it would leave him deserted by the little good Acquaintance he has, and prevent his gaining any other ?

Mr. Spectator who seems to agree with the author of *The Compleat English Tradesman* in conniving at a cerfain kind of "trade lies," is definitely for "appearance" and declares :

> As the Appearance of an easy Fortune is necessary towards making one, I don't know but it might be of Advantage sometimes to throw into one's Discourse certain Exclamations upon Bank-stock and to shew a marvellous Surprise upon its Fall, as well as the most affected Triumph upon its Rise. The Veneration and Respect which the Practice of all Ages has preserved to Appearances, without Doubt suggested to our Tradesmen that wise and publick Custom, to apply and recommend themselves to the Publick by all those Decorations upon their Sign-posts and Houses, which the most eminent Hands in the Neighbourhood can furnish them with.

For this same reason Mr. Osbonrn advises his son to appear in his "habit rather above than below his fortune," telling him "that he will find an handsome suit of cloaths always procures some additional respect. Mr. Spectator himself has observed that his banker ever bows lowest to him when he wears his full-buttomed wig, and writes him *Mr.* or *Esq.* "accordingly as he sees him dress'd."[102] After all, Juvenal is right when he says

> Want is the Scorn of a wealthy Fool,
> And Wit in Rags is turn'd to Ridicule.
> —Dryden's translation

All of which confirms that for a successful tradesman or merchant personal appearance or sartorial considerations are by no means negligible, but a business necessity. Fine feathers *pass for* fine birds, and that is what really counts for Mr. Spectator's tradesmen.

So far I have concerned myself with the doings of merchants and tradesmen, or with what they are, as well as with what they ought to be but are not. I have not spoken much about customers, on the tacit assumption that "customers are always right." But this assumption does not seem quite defensible for the eighteenth century, for judging from what is aired in Mr. Spectator's columns, London shops were suffering from the frequent visits, or rather visitations, of a tribe of "sticky customers" called "cheapeners." "Cheapening" was then almost a pastime in which people indulged when then wanted, and even when they did not want, to buy things at the shop. It was shopping or a part of its process which very often resulted in no purchase at all. Modern shopping has largely eliminated it, so far as the diversional aspect of it is concerned, and with the thing is gone the name, too. The archaic sense of *cheapen* which still remains in place-names like *Cheapside* and in its German cousin "many times removed," the verb

[102] *Spectator* No. 150.

"kaufen," is lost to us, together with all its implications. We no longer witness a scene such as this :

> Now in contiguous drops the flood comes down,
> Threatening with deluge this devoted town.
> To shops in crowds the daggled females fly,
> *Pretend to cheapen goods, but nothing buy.*
> Swift, *A Description of a City-Shower* (1712)

But of course, cheapening was not confined to females ; there were men cheapeners as well as female cheapeners. Shakespeare thinks of men as cheapeners of women in lines like "virtuous, or I'll never *cheapen* her" (*Much Ado about Nothing*, II, 23. 33) or "she would make a puritan of the devil, if he should *cheapen* a kiss of her (*Pericles*, IV. 6. 10). We read also of Pepys[103] cheapening goods and a good many other men in Shakespeare's, Pepy's and Mr. Spectator's[104] England doing likewise, either with a serious intention or just for fun.

Generally speaking, to shopkeepers women seem to have been worse cheapeners than men, for—

> Miss, the mercer's plague, from Shop to Shop,
> Wandering, and littering, with unfolded silks,
> The polished counter, and approving none,
> Or promising with smiles to call again.
> Cowper's *Task* VI.

And significantly enough, these women had a special nickname by which they were known among their victims : *Silkworms*[105] Mr. Spectator (Addison), as a matter of fact, did not know its meaning until he happened to be informed of it in one of his town rambles.

> I was surprized with this Phrase, but found it was a Cant among the Hackney Fraternity for their best Customers, Women who ramble twice or thrice a Week from Shop to Shop, to turn over all the Goods in Town without buying any thing. The Silk-Worms are, it seems, indulged by the Tradesmen ; for though they never buy, they are ever talking of new Silks, Laces and Ribbands, and serve the Owners in getting them Customers, as their common Dunners do in making them pay.[106]

Although Mr. Spectator thus assigns them in part to economic entomology, literature is more interested in the nuisance value of the "silkworms." Mr. Spectator's own columns are filled at times with protests from his

[103] See, for instance, Pepys's *Diary*, under August 18, 1666. "At my little mercer's in Lombard Street, who hath the pretty wench, like the old Queen, and there *cheapened some stuffs* to hang my room."

[104] Mandeville writing in Mr. Spectator's time refers occasionally to cheapening by men as well as women. *Cf. Fable*, Remark (B). "…shew me the Tradesman that has always discover'd the Defects of his Goods to *those that cheapen'd them.*" Evidently such people were both men and women.

[105] NED. "Silkworm—a woman given to frequenting drapers' shops and examining goods without buying." Its etymology is not known ; presumably the "worm" in it has the same connotation as in "*bookworm.*"

[106] *Spectator* No. 454.

shopkeeping readers against them. Look at this letter from Rebecca.

> I am, dear Sir, one of the top China-Women about Town; and though I say it keep as good Things, and receive as fine Company as any o' this End of the Town...I am in a fair way to be easy, were it not for a Club of Female Rakes, who, under Pretence of taking their innocent Rambles, forsooth, and diverting the Spleen, seldom fail to plague me twice or thrice a Day, to cheapen Tea or buy a Screen.....Well, after all this Rocket and Clutter, this is too dear, that is their Aversion; another Thing is charming, but not wanted: The Ladies are cured of the Spleen, but I am not a Shilling the better for it. Lord! what signifies one poor Pot of Tea, considering the Trouble they put me to?[107]

This Rebbeca, self-styled "the Distressed," gives these silkworms the epithet of "No-Customers," as "they seldom or never buy any thing." They are compared by her to the "Night-Goblins that take a Pleasure to over-turn the Disposition of Plates and Dishes in the Kitchins of your housewifely Maids."

But it is not from silkworms or night-goblins alone that female shopkeepers have to suffer. City-loïterers are another species of plague to them. Here is the problem of a barmaid.

> What I ask of you (*scil.* Mr. Spectator), is to acquaint my Customers (who are otherwise good ones) that I am unavoidably hasped in my Bar, and cannot help hearing the improper Discourses they are pleased to entertain me with...At the same Time half a Dozen of them loll at the Bar staring just in my Face, ready to interpret my Looks and Gestures according to their own Imaginations. In this passive Condition I know not where to cast my Eyes, place my Hands, or what to employ my self in: But this Confusion is to be a Jest, and I hear them say in the End, with an insipid Air of Mirth and Subtlety, Let her alone, she knows as well as we for all she looks so....[108]

This gives Mr. Spectator occasion to add further vagaries of a certain class of buyers.

> ...This Correspondent is not the only Sufferer in this Kind, for I have long Letters both from the *Royal* and *New Exchange* on the same Subject. They tell me that a young Fop cannot buy a Pair of Gloves, but he is at the same Time straining for some ingenious Ribaldry to say to the young Woman who helps them on. It is small Addition to the Calamity, that the Rogues buy as hard as the plainest and modest Customers they have; besides which they loll upon their Counters half an Hour longer than they need, to drive away their other Customers, who are to share their Impertinences with the Milliner, or go to another Shop. Letters from *Change-Alley* are full of the same Evil and the Girls tell me except I can chace some eminent Merchants from their Shops they shall in a short Time fail.

Summing it all up, Mr. Spectator treats us to his general philosophy of buying and selling with his usual sparkling humour.

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[107] *Spectator* No. 336.
[108] *Spectator* No. 155.

> Instead of the plain downright lying, and asking and bidding so unequally to what they will really give and take, we may hope to have from these fine Folks an Exchange of Complements. There must certainly be a great deal of pleasant Difference between the Commerce of Lovers, and that of all other Dealers, who are, in a Kind, Adversaries. A sealed Bond or a Bank Note, would be a pretty Gallantry to convey unseen into the Hands of one whom a Director is charged with; otherwise the City Loiterers are still more unreasonable than those at the other End of the Town: At the *New Exchange* they are eloquent for want of Cash, but in the City they ought with Cash to supply their Want of Eloquence.

Nevertheless, when gallant Mr. Spectator goes so far as to say that "it would be as much Impertinence to go into a Shop of one of these young Women without buying, *as into the Shop of any other Trader,*[104] I must beg leave to suspend judgment and defer expressing my own opinion until I have thought it over at my leisure.

My next topic of discussion is Mr. Spectator's stand on labour in its various ramifications. We have already seen his attitude towards indolence or idleness which he rejects as a negation of productive labour. Then there are several collateral questions, frequently taken up in his periodical, which directly or indirectly relate to the problem of labour. Among these are Population, Charity Schools, Domestic Service, Roguery and Beggary, Men of Industry, and possibly quite many others. I will now consider some of these as Mr. Spectator sees them and as it pleases his humour to reflect on them at varying lengths.

First, as to labour distinguished from sport. Mr. Spectator recognizes this distinction, but fails to base it on economic grounds, except to say that those so circumstanced as to be exempted from labour—landlords and the *rentier* class in general—must seek some means of physical exercise for their health. In this way Sir Roger's fox hunting is ruled out of the Spectatorial definition of labour, which is neatly expressed as follows:

> Bodily Labour is of two kinds, either that which a Man submits to for his Livelihood, or that which he undergoes for his Pleasure. The latter of them generally changes the Name of Labour for that of Exercise, but differs only from ordinary Labour as it arises from another Motive.[110]

Mr. Spectator, as may be needless to explain, does not condemn summarily all sources of unearned income as being against social justice. He can smile good-humouredly upon the good knight's preoccupation with his form of exercise, to the exclusion of all productive labour. This seems, however, a concession on his part, as we know and have noted elsewhere his dissatisfaction with rural indolence as exemplified by Will Wimble.

Labour, to Mr. Spectator's mind, is a duty which Nature has imposed upon man, for physical as well as social reasons.

[109] My italics.
[110] *Spectator* No. 115.

> And that we might not want Inducements to engage us in such an Exercise of the Body as is proper for its Welfare, it is so ordered that nothing can be procured without it. Not to mention Riches and Honour, even Food and Raiment are not to be come at without the Toil of the Hands and Sweat of the Brows. Providence furnishes Materials, but expects that we should work them up for our selves. The Earth must be laboured before it gives its Encrease and when it is forced into its several Products, how many Hands must they pass through before they are fit for Use? Manufactures, Trade, and Agriculture, naturally employ more than nineteen Parts of the Species in twenty; and *as for those who are not obliged to Labour, by the Condition in which they are born, they are more miserable than the rest of Mankind, unless they indulge themselves in that voluntary Labour which goes by the Name of Exercise.*[111]

An important idea contained in this statement is that of division of labour, social or technical, and to it Mr. Spectator makes repeated reference. An example of it is found in his thoughts on paper manufacture which he discusses in No. 367.[112] Another is Sir Andrew Freeport's reference to the intricate machanism of divided labour in the process of watch-making (No. 232) which will be taken up presently.

The duty of labour is inevitably heavy on the poor to whom eighteenth-century mercantilism looked for a plentiful supply of cheap labour. But the majority of the poor, being placed in conditions of quasi-slavery, had no other incentive to work than the urge of bare subsistance. Mr. Spectator's support of charity schools is, to a great extent, guided by considerations of greater economic efficiency to be achieved through gratuitous education of poor children. In a like mood he pens these lines:

> It is generally observed, That in Countries of the greatest Plenty there is the poorest Living; like the Schoolmen's Ass, in one of my Speculations,[113] the People almost starve between two Meals. The Truth is, the Poor, which are the Bulk of a Nation, work only that they may live; and if with two Days Labour they can get a wretched Subsistence for a Week, they will hardly be brought to work the other four: But then with the Wages of two Days they can neither pay such Prices for their Provisions, nor such Excises to the Government.[114]

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[111] *Spectator* No. 115. The italics are mine.

[112] "Our Paper Manufacture takes into it several mean Materials which would be put to no other use, and affords Work for several Hands in the collection of them, which are incapable of any other Employment. Those poor Retailers whom we see so busie in every Street, deliver in their respective Gleanings to the Merchant. The merchant carries them in Loads to the Paper-Mill., where they pass through a fresh Set of Hands, and give Life to another Trade...It is pleasant enough to consider the Changes that a Linnen Fragment undergoes by passing through the several Hands above-mentioned. The finest Pieces of Holland, when worn to Tatters, assume a new Whiteness more beautiful than their first, and often return in the Shape of Letters to their native Country."

[113] *Spectator* No. 191.

[114] *Spectator* No. 200, supposed to have been written by Henry Martyn.

Mr. Spectator, like most of his contemporaries, believes in a large population of the poor as a favourable condition for competitive international trade. The fact is nowhere made so manifest as in his wailings over common beggary in which he finds so much productive labour thrown away. He puts his thought into the mouth of Sir Andrew:

> But of all Men living, we Merchants, who live by Buying and Selling, ought never to encourage Beggars. The Goods we export are indeed the Product of the Lands, but much the greatest Part of their Value is the Labour of the People: But how much of these People's Labour shall we export, whilst we hire them to sit still? The very Alms they receive from us, are the Wages of Idleness. I have often thought that no Man should be permitted to take Relief from the Parish, or to ask it in the Street, till he has first purchas'd as much as possible of his own Livelihood by the Labour of his own Hands; and then the Publick ought only to be tax'd to make good the Deficiency.[115]

If this sort of thing could be done, it would certainly draft a multitude of new labourers into productive channels and reduce the prices of British manufactures accordingly. The economics of it is this:

> It is the very Life of Merchandise to buy cheap and sell dear. The Merchant ought to make his Out-set as cheap as possible, that he may find the greater Profit upon his Returns; and nothing will enable him to do this like the Reduction of the Price of Labour upon all our Manufactures. This too would be the ready Way to increase the Number of our foreign Markets: The Abatement of the Price of the Manufacture would pay for the Carriage of it to more distant Countries; and this Consequence would be equally beneficial both to the landed and trading Interests.

He concludes by saying that "as so great an Addition of *labouring Hands*[116] would produce *this happy Consequence both to the Merchant and the Gentleman;*[117] our Liberality to common Beggars, and every other Obstruction to the Increase of Labourers, must be equally pernicious to both."

To Mr. Spectator these labourers are no more than mere "hands,"[118] labouring hands, so that it is not surprising at all that he should be concerned almost exclusively with the advantages for the merchant and the gentleman and give little or no thought to the possibility, far less desirability, of giving a share of the profit realized to one of its chief sources—labour. This only echoes the wide-spread notion of Mr. Spectator's century that labour is a mere commodity and does not represent human personality.

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[115] *Spectator* No. 232.

[116] [117] My italics.

[118] The custom of calling labourers or workers "hands" as in "farm hands" and "factory hands" persisted well into the nineteenth century and perhaps later. Edmund Burke's characterization of labourers in his essay on *Scarcity* is decidedly less flattering to them than this. Bailey's definition of "labourer" is "one that does drudgery Work" and "drudgery" is explained as "dirty laborious Work, Slavery."

What is more, people had no manner of qualms about saying so in speech and in print.[119]

Efficiency of production achieved by the ingenious device of division of labour with its many economic advantages is explained by Mr. Spectator from the position of Sir Andrew Freeport, a merchant and an employer of labour, and on the authority of Sir William Petty.[120] In view of its interest and importance, I quote the passage concerned more or less fully.

> It is certain that a single Watch could not be made so cheap in Proportion by only one Man, as a hundred Watches by a hundred; for as there is vast Variety in the Work, no one Person could equally suit himself to all the Parts of it; the Manufacture would be tedious, but at last but clumsily performed: But if an hundred Watches were to be made by a hundred Men, the Cases may be assigned to one, the Dials to another, the Wheels to another, the Springs to another, and every other Part to a proper Artist; and there would be no need of perplexing any one Person with too much Variety, every one would be able to perform his single Part with greater Skill and Expedition; and the hundred Watches would be finished in one fourth Part of the Time of the first one, and every one of them at one fourth Part of the Cost, though the Wages of every Man were equal. The Reduction of the Price of the Manufacture would increase the Demand of it, all the same Hands would be still employed and as well paid. The same Rule will hold in the Cloathing, the Shipping, and all the other Trades whatsoever. And thus an Addition of Hands to our Manufactures will only reduce the Price of them; the Labourer will still have as much Wages, and will consequently be enabled to purchase more Conveniences of Life; so that every Interest in the Nation would receive a Benefit from the Increase of our working People.

The paragraph is interesting as one of the earliest signs of the popular attention that the idea of a technical division of labour was beginning to attract in England. It is informing to read that already at this date the device was thought applicable to a large variety of manufactures including watch-making. The fact reminds us that we are fast approaching the factory age, and that the Industrial Revolution is not very far away. Mr. Spectator's

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[119] This is probably a convenient place to insert a note on what Mr. Spectator and his century thought of masses of people variously called "mob," "rabble," "multitude" and the like. These terms occur frequently in the literature of the period and reflect the prevailing class pride or superciliousness in its varying shades. But I know of no more forthright expression of this contemporary mood than Bailey's, viz. "the Dregs of People." (*Dictionary*, see under "Rabble.")

[120] Sir William Petty's influence on eighteenth century England was very considerable. His *Political Arithmetick* was published in 1699 and a new edition came out in 1711, so that both the *Spectator* and the *Fable of the Bees* contain reference to the idea of division of labour doubtless through his influence. It is generally agreed, however, that the definite statement of it as a principle, under the name of "division of labour," was the pioneer work of Adam Smith. Mandeville came near that name; he wrote "dividing and sub-dividing labour" but not "division of labour."

enthusiasm for the new method of production is understandable, but his view of its effect upon labourers seems too optimistic. I, for one, feel a little disturbed over his stubbornly mercantilistic defence of a large population of low wage-earners, but that is anticipating history. We have to wait until 1776 to be told that the division of labour is not an unmixed blessing, that it tends to destroy the finer graces of workers as men and citizens, and consequently, that it must have as its necessary corrective an adequate system of public education for the working citizens.[121]

Incidentally Mr. Spectator's advocacy of a large population for national welfare has a mercantilist setting in other respects as well. He regards people, and not territory, as the primary source of wealth, and therefore objects to all wars, especially those for territorial aggrandisement, as futile destroyers of a vast number of precious (that is, economically precious) human lives. "If a severe View were to be taken of their (*scil.* ambitious princes') Conduct," says he, "if the Profit and Loss by their Wars could be justly ballanc'd, it would be rarely found that the Conquest is sufficient to repay the Cost." We remember having heard him say elsewhere that "Trade, without enlarging the British Territories, has given us a kind of additional Empire."[122]

A large population is justified as bringing in riches for the prince and the commonwealth. The idea is in some way reminiscent of the "cameralistic" economic thought epitomized in the maxim "*Pauvre peuple, pauvre roi.*" Mr. Spectator remarks:

> The Prince for the public Good has a Sovereign Property in every private Person's Estate; and consequently his Riches must encrease or decrease in Proportion to the Number and Riches of his Subjects. For Example, If Sword or Pestilence should destroy all the People of this Metropolis..., the Queen must needs lose a great Part of her Revenue, or, at least, what is charg'd upon the City must encrease the Burthen upon the rest of her Subjects. Perhaps the Inhabitants here are not above a tenth Part of the Whole, yet as they are better fed, and cloath'd, and lodg'd than her other Subjects, the Customs and Excises upon their Consumption, the Imposts upon their Houses, and other Taxes, do very probably make a fifth Part of the whole Revenue of the Crown. But this is not all; the Consumption of the City takes off a great Part the Fruits of the whole Island; and as it pays such a Proportion of the Rent or yearly Value of the Lands in the Country, so it is the Cause of paying such a Proportion of Taxes upon these Lands.

Nor is it the City alone that is valuable as a source of revenue to the Crown; the masses of the people without property must also be reckoned with, as consumers and therefore as contributors to the royal coffers. Mr. Spectator estimates their number at seven million[123] or seven eighths of

[121] Smith, *Wealth and Nations*, Bk. V, § 1, art. 2.
[122] *Spectator* No. 69.
[123] Mr. Spectator's estimate seems too high. According to J. H. Plumb, "The population was probably, in 1714, about five and a half millions, and from 1714 to 1742, after an initial spurt, there was a very small increase." (*England in the Eighteenth Century*, p. 11)

the whole population of Great Britain and he imagines that three fourths of the entire fruits of the country are consumed by them. He imagines also that two thirds of all the customs and excises are paid by the propertyless masses. Add these two figures relating to consumption together, and you will obtain a fair idea of the economic importance of numbers.

Such is the general drift of Mr. Spectator's argument in favour of a large population. Here we must say again that it can only be rightly understood against its proper historical background, but in his day it represented the intelligent opinion of the country.[124]

Finally, I must refer to some signs of the restlessness of labour. Mr. Spectator does not report much on what we call "labour trouble," although we know that his age was already beginning to have a foretaste of it. Defoe, for instance, contributes a series of articles on "Weavers' Riots against Calicoes," in *Mist's Journal* (1719).[125] Mr. Spectator makes passing mention of "a second button-makers' petition" in his essay No. 176 (Budgell). This is said to be "a reference to a statute of 1709, in the interests of the many thousands of men, women, and children, who depended upon the making of silk, mohair, gimp, and thread buttons and button-holes with the needle."[126]

On the other hand, Mr. Spectator shows a lively interest in the unruliness and misconduct of domestic servants. This is a theme on which we find quite many authors of the period writing with a satirical delight. Swift, Defoe, Mandeville and Steele are specially to be noted among them, and Steele, in particular, has left us some shrewd observations on the subject both as a playwright and as Mr. Spectator. Sociologically these accounts are of special interest as indications of the loosening of master-and-servant relations which was making itself felt in Augustan England. The almost romantic picture Mr. Spectator draws of Sir Roger's perfect relationship with his servants becomes all the more effective when set against scenes of riotous freedom exhibited by London servants and painted by the same gifted pen.

So here we are faced with a contrast between the traditional kind of

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[124] Those living in overpopulated parts of the present-day world will read with envy and surprise the following passage from Mr. Spectator's essay here discussed: "That Paradox therefore in old *Hesiod*...Half is more than the Whole, is very applicable to the present Case; since nothing is more true in political Arithmetick, than that the same People with half a Country is more valuable than with the whole. I begin to think there was nothing absurd in Sir *William Petty*, when he fancied if all the Highlands of *Scotland*, and the whole Kingdom of Ireland were sunk in the Ocean, so that the People were all saved and brought into the Lowlands of Great Britain; nay tho' they were to be reimburst the Value of their Estates by the Body of the People, yet both the Sovereign and the Subjects in general would be enriched by the very Loss." (*Spectator* No. 200)

[125] Lee, *op. cit.* Vol. ii, pp. 136—142 and pp. 144—147.

[126] The *Spectator* (Ev. Lib.) Vol. II, p. 478.

social relations and its modern counterpart that is becoming more and more contractual in character and spirit. It is noteworthy, however, how in both cases Mr. Spectator takes special care to emphasize the economic element as a key-point in master-and-servant relations. Thus Sir Roger's success as a master of servants is attributed, in no small measure, to his well-directed generosity to them, which comes from the fact that

> He is so good an Husband, and knows so thoroughly that the Skill of the Purse is the Cardinal Virtue of this Life; knows so well that Frugality is the Support of Generosity, that he can often spare a large Fine when a Tenement falls, and gives that Settlement to a good Servant who has a mind to go into the World, or make a Stranger pay the Fine to that Servant, for his more comfortable Maintenance, if he stays in his Service.[127]

In short, knowing, as a man of honour and generosity, what it is to remain long in the service of another, be he the best person breathing, Sir Roger makes a point of "putting his servants into independent livelihoods" as fast as he is able to do so.

In the case of city servants, too, Mr. Spectator lays hold of an economic factor to which he ascribes the fundamental cause of their corruption. It is the custom of paying them board wages in addition to their regular wages. Commenting upon a letter from Philo-Britannicus giving vent to strong grievances against English servants, he takes occasion to describe the situation in a vivid and entertaining manner.

> The Complaint of this Letter runs wholly upon Men Servants; and I can attribute the Licentiousness which has at present prevailed among them, to nothing but what an hundred before me have ascribed it to, The Custom of giving Board-Wages: This one Instance of false Œconomy, is sufficient to debauch the whole Nation of Servants, and makes them as it were but for some Part of their Time in that Quality.

All this is about the institution of board wages as an instance of false economy, but the consequences are little short of dramatic.

> They either are attending in Places where they meet and run into Clubs, or else, if they wait at Taverns, they eat after their Masters, and reserve their Wages for other Occasions. From hence it arises, That they are but in a lower Degree what their Masters themselves are; and usually affect an Imitation of their Manners: And you have in Liveries Beaux, Fops, and Coxcombs, in as high Perfection, as among People that keep Equipages. It is a common Humour among the Retinue of Men of Quality, when they are in these Revels, that is when they are out of their Masters' Sight, to assume in an humourous Way the Names and Titles of those whose Liveries they wear. By which Means Characters and Distinctions become so familiar to them, that it is to this, among other Causes, one may impute a certain Insolence among our Servants, that they take no Notice of any Gentleman though they know him ever so well, except he is an Acquaintance of their Masters.[128]

[127] *Spectator* No. 106.
[128] *Spectator* No. 87.

Steele (Mr. Spectator in this piece) in his play "The Unconscious Lovers" makes Tom, one of the servants, say to his uncle, a butler, "Sir, we servants of single gentlemen are another kind of people than you domestic ordinary drudges that do business—we are raised above you. The pleasures of board wages, tavern dinners, and many a clear gain, vails, alas! you never heard or dreamt of."[129] Another servant in another play of about the same period (Jeremy in Congreve's *Love for Love*) expresses the same feeling when he says to his debt-ridden master, "Sir, you're a Gentleman, and probably understand this fine Feeding (*scil.* Epictetus): But if you please, I had rather be at Board Wages."[130]

Perhaps it looks like an exaggeration to count these antics of liveried servants among symptoms of labour trouble. But when you read that they form themselves into a club to run away with their unwarrantable liberties, they begin to become troublesome. And this suspicion deepens when a contemporary writer of Mr. Spectator comes forward with a more explicit, though facetious, statement.

> All noted Eating-Houses and Places that many Gentlemen resort to for Diversion or Business, more especially the Precincts of Westminster-hall, are the great Schools for Servants, where the dullest Fellows may have their Understanding improved; and get rid at once of their Stupidity and their Innocence. They are the Academies for Footmen, where Publick Lectures are daily read on all Sciences of low Debauchery by the experienc'd Professors of them, and Students are instructed in above Seven Hundred illiberal Arts, how to Cheat, Impose upon, and find out the blind side of their Masters, with so much Application, that in few Years they become Graduates in Iniquity.[131]

And this is very serious:

> I am credibly inform'd that a parcel of Footmen are arriv'd to that height of Insolence as to have enter'd into a Society together, and made Laws by which they oblige themselves not to serve for less than such a Sum, nor to carry Burdens or any Bundles or Parcel above a certain Weight, not exceeding Two or Three Pounds, with other Regulations directly opposite to the Interest of those they serve, and altogether destructive of the Use they were design'd for. If any of them be turn'd away for strictly adhering to the Orders of this Honourable Corporation, he is taken care of till another Service is provided for them, and there is no Money wanting at any Time to commence and maintain a Lawsuit against any Master that shall pretend to strike or offer any other Injury to his Gentleman Footman, contrary to the Statutes of their Society.[132]

When things come to this pass, I feel sufficiently justified in speaking of early signs of labour unrest, even in Mr. Spectator's England.

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[129] Act 1, sc. 1.
[130] Act 1, sc. 1.
[131] Mandeville, *Fable*, Vol. 1, p. 348
[132] *Ibid.*, p. 350.

SUMMING UP

At the end of my peregrination through the 633 most delightful essays of vivid description and fertile thought which make up the *Spectator*, I feel more than ever convinced of the reality or justifiability of my theme: *Mr. Spectator as an Economist*. While knowing full well that I have not done Mr. Spectator anything at all like justice in the unfamiliar rôle which I may be accused of having thrust upon him, I nevertheless venture to hope that the method of direct narration or quotation of the author's original words, which I have, as far as possible, employed in this paper, has served to reveal him in this own light, as he speculates and holds forth on economy, true and false, and other problems of large social and human interest. The clues, thus revealed, to his character as an economist we may once more piece together and draw with a few bold strokes the lineaments of the man from *our* point of view.

Mr. Spectator, as an early eighteenth-century Londoner living close to the City, is characteristically middle-class in his economic outlook. He is a great friend and admirer of Commerce and Trade, but has only an imperfect sympathy with Agriculture and Rural Economy. Obviously both his excellences and his prejudices are those of Sir Andrew Freeport, rather than those of Sir Roger de Coverley, dearly as he loves this charming country gentleman.

Mr. Spectator, like all true-born Englishmen, is a sincere patriot, although it is doubtful whether he is prepared to go all the way with Sir Roger in believing that "one Englishman can beat three Frenchmen," or that "London Bridge is a greater piece of work than any other of the seven wonders of the world." Nevertheless, his patriotism, slightly old-fashioned as it may seem, is sufficiently strong to combine with his love of Commerce to give him a tinge of mercantilism in spite of his, on the whole, liberal economics. It is this mercantilist-liberalism in him that makes him seem narrow and ungenerous in his attitude towards the poor and almost feudal on the problem of labour. In all this Mr. Spectator is typical of his age, and shares much in common with Defoe and Mandeville, men of a different mould, but for all that, children of that same age.

Mr. Spectator, unlike most middle-class writers, is a classicist of rare distinction. This endows his economics with a high moral tone and a finished literary expression enlivened with humour and alive with humanity—qualities not easily found in students of the Dismal Science or in the economic technicians of our own day. But his classicism in the eight volumes before

us leans visibly towards Cicero and the Latin poets rather than towards Plato or Aristotle, thereby revealing him a man of action even in his classical preferences.

An economist without being an "economy-pedant," to speak Spectatorially, our Author—or, several authors in one—holds the mirror up to the facts and fancies of economic life in Augustan England, at once informing and delighting us with his sundry findings enlightened by wise and always human speculations. In him and through him we read Economics in Literature and Literature in Economics and realize that understanding of Literature is enriched and made more real by a grasp of one of the most vital factors of human existence—the economic. Our journeyings in quest of Truth, whether in literature or in science, do not always proceed along the beaten tracks, but very often begin just where the pavement ends.