altogether exaggerated view of this, one is tempted to wonder whether anything could be devised more calculated to cause friction, distrust, and enmity than the prevailing wages system. What is urgently wanted is something that will (1) make the men feel that they are *associates* in the work and not mere hired machines or tools; and (2) *demonstrate* to them what they cannot see at present—although it is probably, on the whole, the case—that they are receiving a fair share of the wealth they are helping to create. These ends, at least, will surely be attained by giving the men a definite share in the ultimate results of the work, and it is difficult to see how they can be secured by any other means.

If the competitive system of bare wages tends, as undoubtedly it does, to *separate* master and man, the introduction of the co-operative principle (for which profit-sharing is but another name) must in the nature of things tend to draw them together and to foster a spirit of sympathy, confidence, and mutual helpfulness. It is this humanizing and harmonizing influence which is above all things needed in modern industry, and which profit-sharing, if carried out in an unselfish spirit on the part of the employer, can hardly fail to exert. But it cannot be pretended that it is a panacea for all industrial ills, and much will depend on the mode of its application and on the spirit in which it is administered.—I am, Sir, &c.,

AN EMPLOYER FOR THIRTY YEARS.

SUPER-LUXURY.

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE "SPECTATOR."]

SIR,—Though a great admirer of the temperate and manly tone which characterizes the *Spectator*, I should like to point out what seems to me an error in the editorial note appended to Archdeacon Armstrong Hall's letter in your issue of March 23rd. You state that "the essential evil of super-luxury is the harm done to those who indulge in it.' I would suggest, to begin with, that super-luxury, by its evil example, works infinite harm outside its own sphere, and that, moreover, history teaches us that it is generally accompanied by appalling misery at the other end of the social scale. It is easy to see that the bulk of the money paid for it, far from circulating for the benefit of the whole community, goes into the pockets of those already rich; and that, secondly, super-luxury diverts capital and human energy from the creation of wealth in the necessaries of life to the creation of that which is in no sense needful even to a dignified and cultured existence. It is therefore literally "throwing money away," as Mr. Hall puts it. To thoughtful people who are committed to no economic creed of any sort, and whose circumstances do not bias them, either on the side of rich or poor, it is the wastefulness of super-luxury, not its enervating influence, which is its essential evil. Such observers cannot but be shocked by it, for they must always be saddened by the hopeless poverty of which too much is seen in our large cities. In conclusion may I quote some lines from Milton's "Comus" to point a moral?

> "If every just man that now pines with want
> Had but a moderate and beseeming share
> Of that which lewdly pampered luxury
> Now heaps upon some few with vast excess,
> Nature's full blessings would be well dispensed
> In unsuperfluous even proportion,
> And she no whit encumbered of her store.
> And then the Giver would be better thanked,
> His praise due paid."

—I am, Sir, &c., PRAECEPTOR.

[We could wish the putting down of super-luxury would have the economic effect expected by our correspondent and by Milton. It would, however, in reality have no such effect. Economically it is unimportant if not entirely negligible. Far more momentous economically is the waste caused by bad and inefficient methods of production and by the clinging to old systems of transport and distribution when sounder systems might be employed. All Lucullus's dinners, all Eugenio's wines and perfumes, all Delilah's fine linen and brocades, are as nothing in the matter of waste compared with Jones's limpet-like determination not to improve his system of manufacture till driven thereto by the risk of bankruptcy. "It was my father's custom, and so it shall be mine" has deprived far more poor men of a share of the good things of this world than any wallowing in luxury. Many luxuries, indeed, are useful incentives to hard work—carrots in front of the donkey's nose. Let us make men feel how ignoble "wallowing" is, how foolish and how contemptible, but let us not run down the blind alley of the Sumptuary Laws.—ED. *Spectator*.]

A LANCASHIRE LESSON.

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE "SPECTATOR."]

SIR,—Having seen a letter in your issue of March 23rd attacking the luxury and extravagance of the middle class, I beg to state a few plain facts exposing the prodigality of the working classes of South Lancashire. Let the collier have his sirloin of beef, his recreation, and his honest pleasure, but by all means oppose wilful waste and extravagance. On Friday or Saturday the workmen of this district draw their wages, only to spend them in the public-house during the week-end. On Monday they rush to the pawnbroker to pledge their clothes, and this is the routine of their life throughout the year. In this time of distress many landowners have allowed the unemployed to gather and sell the coal contained in the waste heaps on their land. The money obtained is spent in the public-house, in spite of the publicans entreating them to go home to their wives and children. Behind the houses of the miners are heaped up the ashes from the fire-place, which contain much good coal, and this waste is not allowed in the houses of the wealthy middle class. I know of a case where a working man earning 25s. a week has worked overtime and earned £1 a week extra, which was spent at the alehouse bar. I do not deny the fact that there are many thrifty working people just as there are wealthy middle-class people who hate extravagance, but I want to show that the prodigality and waste of the lower classes are proportionate to that of the middle classes. This waste fills the prisons, workhouses, and even asylums, demoralizes the race as a whole, burdens the country with taxation, and finally leads to ruin.—I am, Sir, &c.,

OBSERVER.

WHAT IS LIBERTY?

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE "SPECTATOR."]

SIR,—I hope you will admit my protest against your assertion that you would not be acting justly if you failed to express "admiration for the way in which the miners as a whole have refrained from disorder." That is to say that, supposing they had *not* refrained from disorder, you could not have seriously blamed them. We do not admire a man for refraining from crime. Men who take their stand on their liberty to sell their own labour at their own price may be expected naturally and excusably (you imply) to use violence in order to prevent other men from doing exactly the same. This is surely not what you mean, but it is what you say; you excuse the conduct abstinence from which you admire. It is such language as this on the part of thinkers which induces, on the part of the thoughtless, acquiescence in the supra-legal position of a class and the surrender of honest labour to tyranny.—I am, Sir, &c., JULIA WEDGWOOD.

[It is something of a novelty for us to be treated as apologists for trade-union tyranny. We cannot, however, admit that men under strong temptation are not to be praised for doing their duty. We should have condemned disorder unsparingly, but it was none the less pleasant to be able to refrain from such condemnation. Instead of feeling that working men may be excused for having resort to violence to prevent others from working, we regard "the right to work" in its true sense as a right which the State must at all costs secure to all its citizens. If it fails to do so it has been guilty of dereliction of duty in an essential matter.—ED. *Spectator*.]

THE STATES-GENERAL AND ITS FAILURE.

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE "SPECTATOR."]

SIR,—The Revolution of 1789 offers a good many curious parallels to our present state. I venture to remind your readers of Lord Acton's words about the States-General, the most memorable of all political assemblies, as he calls it. He goes on to say:—

"The problem of their history is to explain why so genuine a striving for the highest of earthly goods so deplorably failed. The errors that ruined their enterprise may be reduced to one. Having put the nation in the place of the Crown they invested it with the same unlicensed powers, raising no security and no remedy against oppression from below, assuming or believing that a Government