

Punch on Mechanization

We are indebted to Dr. H. E. Kiefer, of Burlington, N. J., for the following quotation from *Punch* of nearly a hundred years ago. It is comment on an address by Sir Robert Peel in 1842 in which he declared that increasing demand for manufactures would increase the demand for machine power. *Punch* serves other purposes than humor.

Machinery, in its progress, has doubtless been the origin of terrible calamity; it has made the strong man so much live lumber. But as we can not go back and must go on, it is for statesmen and philosophers to prepare for the crisis as surely coming as the morning light. How, when machinery is multiplied—as it will be a thousand fold? How, when tens of thousand—thousand are made idle by the ingenuity of the human mind? How, when, comparatively speaking, there shall be no labor for man? Will the multitude lie down and, unrepining, die? We think not—we are sure not. They will raise—and already we hear the murmur—a cry, a shout for the adjustment of interests; a shout that, hard as it is, will strike upon the heart of Mammon, and make the spoiler tremble.

We put this question to Sir Robert Peel; if all labor performed by man were suddenly performed by machine power, and that power in the possession of some thousand individuals—what would be the cry of the rest of the race? Would not the shout be, "Share, Share"?

The steam-engine, despite of themselves, must and will carry statesmen back to first principles. As it is, machinery is a fiend to the poor; the time will come when it will be a beneficent angel.

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