

table of our two recluses. He tasted and commended very much the produce of the garden, and before taking leave of his entertainers, spoke as follows:

“‘Generous islanders, I inhabit a country where game is much more plentiful than here, but where horticulture is quite unknown. It would be an easy matter to bring you every evening four baskets of game, if you will give me in exchange two baskets of vegetables.’

“At these words Robinson and Friday retired to consult, and the debate that took place is too interesting not to be reported in extenso.

“Friday: What do you think of it?

“Robinson: If we close with the proposal, we are ruined.

“F: Are you sure of that? Let us consider.

“R: The case is clear. Crushed by competition, our hunting as a branch of industry is annihilated.

“F: What matters it, if we have the game?

“R: Theory! It will no longer be the product of our labour.

“F: I beg your pardon, sir; for in order to have game we must part with vegetables.

“R: Then, what shall we gain?

“F: The four baskets of game cost us six hours’ work. The foreigner gives us them in exchange for two baskets of vegetables, which cost us only three hours’ work. This places three hours at our disposal.

“R: Say, rather, which are subtracted from our exertions. There is our loss. Labour is wealth, and if we lose a fourth part of our time we shall be less rich by a fourth.

“F: You are greatly mistaken, my good friend. We shall have as much game, and the same quantity of vegetables, and three hours at our disposal into the bargain. This is progress, or there is no such thing in the world.

“R: You lose yourself in generalities! What should we make of these three hours?

“F: We would do something else.

“R: Ah! I understand you. You cannot come to particulars. Something else, something else—that is easily said.

Alternatives

“F: We can fish, we can ornament our cottage, we can read the Bible.

“R: Utopia! Is there any certainty that we should do either the one or the other?

“F: Very well, if we have no wants to satisfy we can rest. Is repose nothing?

“R: But while we repose we may die of hunger.

“F: My dear friend, you have got into a vicious circle. I speak of a repose which will subtract nothing from our supply of game and vegetables. You always forget that by means of our foreign trade nine hours’ labour will give us the same quantity of provisions that we obtain at present with twelve.

“R: It is very evident, Friday, that you have not been educated in Europe, and that you have never read the *Moniteur Industriel*. If you had, it would have taught you this: that all time saved is sheer loss. The important thing is not to eat or consume, but to work. All that we