

The People

Jules Michelet



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This historic book may have numerous typos and missing text. Purchasers can usually download a free scanned copy of the original book (without typos) from the publisher. Not indexed. Not illustrated. 1846 edition. Excerpt: ... without ever growing weary. The motto of the grand manufactures which constitute thy glory, and erect thy taste and sense of art into laws, is this--Invent, or perish! CHAPTER V. SERVITUDES OF THE SHOPKEEPER.* The man of labor, workman or manufacturer, usually looks upon the shopkeeper as an idle man; seated in his shop, what has he to do but to read his paper of a morning, talk the whole day long, and in the evening lock up his till? The workman resolves, if he can manage to lay by, to turn shopkeeper. The shopkeeper is the tyrant of the manufacturer, and throws upon him all the meannesses and vexations he has himself to undergo at the hands of the customer. Now the customer, in the present state of our habits and morals, is a man who wishes to buy for nothing, the poor man who affects to be rich, the mushroom of yesterday, who finds great difficulty in extracting from his pocket the money which has but just found its way into it.f They require two things--show and cheapness; the intrinsic worth of the object is a secondary matter. Who asks the price of a good watch? No one. Even the rich only want a showy watch at a low price. The shopkeeper must outwit these folk, or perish. His whole life consists of two wars,--a war of trickery and cunning against the unreasonable purchaser; a war of vexations and importunity against the manufacturer. Fickle, restless, trifling, he pays the latter back day by day the absurdest caprices of his master, the public; pulls him to the right or the left, gives him a different direction every moment, hinders him * I treat alone of the individual dealer, the retailer, such as he is generally found throughout France, not of the large partnerships which exist only in some of our large cities. f New classes...



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