

SLAVERY.

The Laborer's Position As Aptly Defined by the Prattle of a Little Boy.

I always read the conversations which Life publishes between a father and his inquisitive boy, and every time I read one it reminds me of a conversation between a father and his son which I have either read or dreamed. It went somewhat thus:
What place is this, pa?
This is a brick yard, my son.
Whose brick yard is it, pa?
It belongs to me, my son.
Do all these big piles of brick belong to you?
Yes, my son, every brick of them.
Did you make them all alone by yourself?
No, my son, these men you see working there make them for me.
Do the men belong to you, pa?
No, my son; those men are free men. No man can own another. If he could, other would be a slave.
What is a slave, pa?
A slave, my son, is a man who has to work for another all his life for only his board and clothes.
If a slave got sick, who pays for the doctor, pa?
Well, his owner does, he can't afford to lose his property.
Why do men work so hard, pa? Do they like it?
Well, no, I don't suppose they do. But they work or starve.
Are these men rich, pa?
Not to any great extent, my son. Do they own any houses, pa?
I rather guess not, my son.
Have they horses and nice clothes and do they go to the seaside when it is warm, like we do, pa?
Well, hardly; it takes them all their time to work for their living.
What is living, pa?
Why, a living—well for them a living is what they eat and wear.
Is that not board and clothes, pa?
I suppose it is.
Well, are they any better off than slaves, pa?
Of course they are, you foolish boy. Why, they are free. They don't need to work for me if they don't want to; they can leave whenever they choose.
And if they leave, won't they have to work, pa?
Yes, of course, they will have to work for someone else.
And will they get any more than a living from him?
No, I suppose not.
Well, then, how are they any better off than slaves?
Why, they have votes; they are free men.
If they get sick, do you pay for the doctor, pa?
Catch me! What have I got to do with it. They must pay for their own doctor.
Can you afford to lose one of the men who work for you, pa?
Of course I can. It doesn't make any difference to me; I can have another whenever I like.
Then you are not so particular about them as if they were your slaves, are you, pa?
No, I suppose not.
Then how is it better for them to be free?
Oh, don't ask such foolish questions, my boy.
What are bricks made of, pa?
Of clay, my son.
Do the bricks belong to the men when they make them, pa?
No, my son; they belong to me.
Why, when the men make them?
Yes; the clay is mine.
Do you make it, pa?
No; God made it, my son.
Did he make it for you, pa?
No; I bought it.
Bought it from God?
No; from a man.
Did the man buy it from God?
No, of course not; he bought it from another man, I suppose.
Did the first man it was bought from buy it from God?
No, I suppose not.
How did he get it, then? How was it his more than anybody's else?
Oh, I don't know; I suppose he just claimed it.
Then if these men should claim it now, would it be theirs?
Oh, bother! Don't be asking such foolish questions.
If you didn't own the brick yard and the clay, how would you make your living?
Oh, I don't know; I suppose I would have to work.
Would you make bricks, pa?
May be I would.
How would you like to make bricks for only your board and clothes, and let the men who claim the yard have everything else?
Nobody would care how I liked it. Poor people must work for their living.
If these men had brickyards of their own, would they work for you, pa?
Not likely; they would work for themselves, probably.
Isn't it lucky that that man claimed this land first, and that you bought it? If he hadn't, may be somebody else would have claimed it, and then may be one of these men would own it now, and then you would have to work for him for your board and clothes. May be you ought to be thankful to Providence for his goodness to you in saving you with-

out working. Should these men's little boys be thankful to Providence, too, pa? Well, I suppose they should.
What for, pa?
Oh, because their pa's have steady work.
Is steady work a good thing, pa?
Of course it is, my son.
Then why don't you work, pa? Nobody could keep you from making bricks, could they?
No, I don't want to keep men out of a job. If I worked, there wouldn't be a job for some other man.
That's kind of you, pa. Do you think if you was to wheel that man's barrow once while he rested he'd get mad about it?
Oh, pshaw! Gentlemen don't wheel barrows.
What's a gentleman, pa?
Why, gentlemen—men who do not need to work—the upper classes.
I thought there wasn't any upper classes in this country. I heard a man say all men are equal.
The man who said it was a socialist or anarchist or something else, or may be it was at election time and he was trying to catch votes.
Say, pa, my Sunday school teacher says we are all God's children. Is she a socialist or an anarchist, or is she trying to catch votes?
Oh, no; that's the right thing to say in churches.
Well, pa, honest now, are these men God's children just as much as we are?
Why, yes, my son, to be sure they are.
Say, pa, do you remember when you bought that dozen allies for brother Jim and me, and I grabbed them all and made Jim give me his top before I'd let him play with them, and you called me a greedy little hog and gave me a licking?
Yes, my son, I remember.
Well, do you think you did right?
Certainly, my son, a parent does right to correct his children and keep them from acquiring bad principles. I bought the marbles for you both. Jim had as much right to them as you.
Well, pa, if those men are God's children just as much as you, then you and they are brothers. And if you make them give you nearly all the bricks you make for allowing them the use of the clay which God made, isn't it the same as my making Jim give me his top for a chance to play with the marbles?
Oh, bother! Don't ask such stupid questions.
Say, pa, do you think God thinks you are a greedy little hog, and that he will punish you for grabbing that clay?
Oh, don't talk so much. Say, ma, take care of this upstart, he makes me tired.—John Hiles.

Nine-Hour Day.

The American Bookmaker, one of the best and most ably edited journals in this country on subjects pertaining to the printing business, comes forth as an advocate of the nine-hour day. It says the time has come when shorter hours must be had, and appeals to the International Typographical Union to submit a proposition to the Typothetae at the coming session of that organization in Chicago and that it will in all probability be accepted. When such journals as the Bookmaker are forced to take up the question of shorter hours, and when it becomes general all over the country then will the shorter day come. Until then it is the duty of every Union man to lend his voice in this great issue, that the result may be brought about as quickly as possible.

Unity of Organization.

Whatever of benefit workingmen have reaped by their hard knocks as producers during the late money stringency has been accomplished by the unity of organization in trade unionism. Much loss and suffering have been entailed by workingmen of all classes. Cut-downs and lockouts have mercilessly impoverished the toilers in almost every locality. Thousands have been made to feel the pangs of hunger by loss of resource through enforced idleness. Unemployed laborers in large business centers have been driven to the point of desperation where "bread or blood" threatened to be the only alternatives. The suffering has been widespread and exasperating, and will leave its profound impress, one which will be lasting upon the survivors of this age and generation. It has been a lesson in economics which should be well studied by all who toil that they may live. Dark and gloomy as the picture has been, no one can estimate the amount of disaster averted by the organization of many branches of labor for protection against just such evils as have lately threatened the very lives of honest, toiling millions. Let organized labor think solemnly of this, and unorganized labor ponder deeply upon the example given in the condition of affairs for the past few months. All should heed the warning. The organized should awaken with renewed energy to further strengthen for unified action, and the unorganized lose no time in becoming allies to a common defense against oppression.—Labor Signal.

The Laborer's Duty.

This is frequently called a representative government. It might better be called a misrepresentative government. What has the average senator or representative in common with the middle classes of this country? Almost nothing. We are happy to be able to note a few exceptions to this almost universal rule, but it is of the majority we speak.
Workingmen of America, you are the very tools in the hands of these scheming politicians, and to you alone must future generations look for a remedy for this evil. You must have men from your own ranks for candidates to all the offices within the gift of the people, and having them as candidates, you must elect them. If you could only be brought out of the lethargy born of a too great dependence upon the purity of purpose and disinterested loyalty to the flag which has been sung from the platforms of political meetings for the past thirty years. If you could only be made to see the power in your hands you would not long continue to shout and tote transparencies for any existing political party.
But, with the true love of country in your heart and a loyalty to the flag that alone saved the nation in '65, you would walk in solid ranks to the ballot box and elect men who are known to be honest and loyal and true.
The sophistry of the average demagogue is sickening to one acquainted with his ways. He prates and sweats on the platform over his loyalty and love of country, while all the time is merely putting up a job by which he can have an opportunity to steal some of the money in the public treasury. There is under the present regime scarcely an office within the gift of the people that it does not take nearly as much money to get elected to as its salary affords. It is a common remark among men who are mentioned as good official timber that they "cannot afford to run for office."
And this is the boasted land of freedom, equal rights and all that. And we repeat that the only remedy lies in the hands of the workingmen of America. You must take a deeper interest in politics on the nation will subside as did Greece and Rome, buried under its own rottenness.

The Two Roads.

Oh, ye blind fools of plutocracy, How long will ye continue in your madness and ignorance to court and invite your own destruction? Can you not see to where your individualism and selfishness, your greed and arrogance are leading? Society today is trembling in the balance. We have come to the meeting of two roads—the one leads to death, chaos, anarchy and destruction—the other to a future bright with hope and promise of the sublimest consummation of the progress of the human race. At the parting of these ways there stands a guide-post. On the one hand is the fearful inscription Dante beheld over the gate of hell, "All hope abandon ye who enter here." On the other are the words of admonition which came from the lips of Israel's second law-giver, "Choose ye this day whom ye will serve." This latter is the road of justice, equality and brotherly co-operation. It is the road marked out by the world's first and greatest Democrat, who nineteen hundred years ago took up the cause of the down-trodden and oppressed and proclaimed the common brotherhood of man. It is the road that leads away from the darkness, bigotry, and selfishness of individualism, to the pure, white sunlight of co-operation. It is the road we, who are fully alive to the fearful issue, are persuading, nay, pleading with tearful eyes and bleeding hearts, the world's civilization of today to pursue. It is the only avenue of escape from the doom of anarchy and chaos.—Labor Leader.

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Wage-Earner Always the Victim.

In a late issue of the Des Moines Artisan Brother Phillips discusses the question of the wage-workers of the country and shows the conditions now confronting them. The article is timely and is as follows:
The conditions confronting the wage-workers of the nation are not presenting favorable signs of immediate improvement. Such tokens as are discernible provoke the fear that the worst conditions have not yet made themselves felt. This is particularly confirmed by the fact that some of the great transportation corporations are seeking to reduce expenses by a reduction in the compensations of their trainmen. The capitalistic unions universally begin at the bottom and cut up in the wage system, instead of at the top and down, thus always failing to reach the heads of departments, when retrenchment is in order. The men who take the hazard of limb and life; who do the hard work; who by pluck and energy win dividends; who by skill that comes by experience, and without whom not a car wheel could be made to turn, are the first to feel the oppressiveness of the hand of officialism, and the last ones to receive a benefit from an improvement of conditions. Those economic principles are wrong in principle and damnable in execution that forever oppress the wage-worker and increase the wealth of the already rich. With stagnation in trade still prevalent manufacturers are slow in starting fires under the boilers of their engines. The building season is almost gone by, and all other enterprises are held in check by the chilling influences of uncertainty that now predominate the business world. The servants (?) of the people who draw \$5,000 per annum and mileage, but who usually travel on free transportation, and who enjoy a \$1,200 clerkship for the benefit of an eligible son or nephew seem to be indifferent to the conditions surrounding the wage-workers, and indulge in "practical politics" instead of rising above partisan action. There is much complaint at political headquarters because the laboring element of the country sometimes contemplates entering the political arena for the purpose of taking a hand in political contests. Politicians well know and fully comprehend that the labor force of the United States is irresistible if it should see fit, in a body, to move on the political works of the nation. Hence no effort is spared to keep the great conservative element of the government disintegrated so it cannot successfully combine in political action. Labor must arouse itself; it must demand the right to be heard, or go down under the adverse waves now sweeping over the republic.

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