

THE LAW OF WAGES.

Wages are governed by the relation of the supply of labor to the demand for labor. When one hundred men are seeking a job, at a given place, and there is only capital enough to employ fifty men, wages are low. But when capital calls for a hundred men and only fifty can be found wanting employment wages are high. All the sophisms of socialists and communists who declare it a duty of the state to furnish compensatory employment, and that the right to work at living wages should be guaranteed by the government, were exposed and refuted by actual failure when put into practice by France.

In 1545 edicts had been issued establishing public workshops and in 1685, 1699 and 1709 de-

First Attempt. crees were made regulating the government workshops of France, which had been established to give employment to idle men and women. Louis XVI did all in his power to make such shops a success. The French people in their constitution of 1793 explicitly affirmed that society, the government, owed subsistence to its citizens by furnishing them work.

Fourier enumerated the doctrines of the *droit au travail* saying:

"God condemned the first man and his posterity to work with the sweat of their brow; but he has not condemned us to be deprived of that work on which our subsistence depends. We can then, in accordance with the rights of man, request philosophers and civilization not to deprive us of that resource which God has left us at the worst and as a chastisement: and to guarantee us the right and the kind of labor to which we have been brought up."

"We have now passed the time to cavil at the rights of man without thinking of recognizing the

The Rights of Man. most important of all, without which the others are nothing. What a shame to the nations who think they understand social politics; ought no one to dwell upon such a shameful error, to study the human mind and the mechanism of society which gives to man all his natural rights, of which society cannot guarantee or admit the principal one, the *droit-au-travail*; that is, the right to work remuneratively."

Such doctrines finally permeated the minds of the masses of France and in 1848 the Revolution furnished a modern opportunity for putting them into practice.

On the twenty-sixth day of the month of February in that year the provisional government of the

February 26, 1848. French people promulgated a decree guaranteeing the existence of the laborer by work and guaranteeing work to all

citizens. Then a committee was created with Louis Blanc at its head to carry out the scheme. He established himself at the Luxembourg, to give work and wages to everybody. He issued as many declarations and as much inflammatory literature as a state committee of fused discontent and greed for office issued for Nebraska in 1900. Blanc's utterances destroyed all relations between labor and capital, between employers and employees. They forbade contracts between those wishing to work and those desiring to hire workmen. They attempted by decree to fix the rates of wages for each kind of service to be rendered. They declared ten hours a day. They sundered labor from capital and paralyzed both. They threatened to appropriate and run all manufacture and commerce by the government, for the government. Thus social order was endangered, and, consequently, the French government organized the *Ateliers Nationaux*—workshops of the nation. The state was to be the universal employer. All the ideas of communism were to be enacted. All paupers and all men out of employment rushed into these workshops of the state and it was soon demonstrated that, though the right to labor was admitted, the duty to labor was not. And in June, 1848, there were one hundred and ten thousand persons on the pay rolls of the government eating up the national substance. State employment thus abolished admits insurrection, rapine and riot.

Is there not a trend now to the same doctrines? Is not state ownership for

Then and Now. railroads a premonitory symptom of acute paternal-

ism in this republic? Are not the bills in state and national legislation, defining the relation of labor to capital, constantly warning us of our descent towards French experimentation, and failed economics? Is not the cry against capital and the inflammatory exhortation of peerless demagoguery a mere repetition in English of the fallacies which in French called down upon that people innumerable and immeasurable woes?

UNDER THE COTTONWOODS.

Mr. Oren F. Mor-ton has written and the Acme Publishing Company, of Morgantown, West Virginia, has published a very realistic story of an early settlement in Cass county, Nebraska. It is entitled "Under the Cottonwoods" and is in whole and in part, in general and in detail, a correct and accurate picture of pioneer life on the prairies of the Tree Planter's state. Every school district library in Nebraska should contain a copy of this story of the hardships, the persistent self-denial and efficient industry of those brave men and noble women who first made homes upon the vast alluvial plains which stretch from the Missouri river westward to the foot-hills of the Rocky Mountains.

The American **CUBAN FINANCES.** congress demands the privilege of supervising the finances of the Cuban government. A congress that spends nearly a billion dollars in a single session is not in a position to complain of the extravagance of somebody else. The Cubans could, with as much propriety, tender their services to check the prodigality of American lawmakers.

RAILROADS. According to veracious peerlessness, now itinerating in

the East, the railroads of Nebraska outnumber the United States senatorships to be bestowed, and that is the reason no election takes place at Lincoln. If the railroads are numerous and useful and prosperous in Nebraska it is not because of Bryanarchy or its teachings. No one has ever accused the calamityites and sixteen-to-one prophets of building a railroad, causing any one else to build one, or of inducing capital to invest in anything in this state.

THE BROADENING OF THE PRESIDENT.

We have watched with deep interest and have advised our readers of the notable broadening of President McKinley's views upon the subject of our trade with foreign countries. The tariff act that bore his name and the Dingley act now in force were drawn with the deliberate purpose of discouraging importations, which is the same thing as discouraging foreign trade. But in his address of recent date the President said:

"Our diversified productions, however, are increasing in such unprecedented volume as to admonish us of the necessity of still further enlarging our foreign markets by broader commercial relations. For this purpose reciprocal trade arrangements with other nations should in liberal spirit be carefully cultivated and promoted."

When the free traders used to say that, they were roundly denounced as enemies of American industries. It was the fashion to say that they were on the pay roll of the Cobden Club. If not quite free trade, it is much freer trade that the President advocates. Reciprocal trade arrangements made in a liberal spirit with other nations, the same nations that we shut out from our markets four years ago, would fundamentally change our tariff policy. It is, in fact, an abandonment of the policy of protection and exclusion that the President recommends. He has good reason for his change of view. Our increasing productiveness, he says admonishes us "of the necessity of still further enlarging our foreign markets by broader commercial relations." This was abominable heresy a few years ago. It is sound doctrine now. It is more than doctrine—it is prophecy, and fulfillment is not far off.—New York Times.