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The Real Cost of Living

Concluding article of this Series - Uuequal Struggle-Special Legislation at Foundation

By F. J. Dixon, M.L.A.

Eyer since Adam was turned out of the garden of Eden the cost of living has been a live question. The Jews had their own troubles with it even after they had reached the promised land-flowing as it was, with milk and honey. In the fifth chapter of Nehemiah we read: "And there exas a great cry of the people and of their wives against their brethren the Jews. For there were that said, We, our sons, and our daughters, are many; therefore we take up corn for them, that we may eat and live. Some also there were that said: We have mortgaged our lands, vineyards and houses, that we might buy corn because of the dearth. There were also that said; We have borrowed money for the king's tribute, and that upon our lands and vineyards. Yet now our flesh is as the flesh of our brethren, 'our children as their children, and lo! we bring into bondage our sons and daughters to be servants.

that upon our lands and vineyards. Yet now our fiesh is as the flesh of our brethren. Your children as their children, and lot we bring into bondage our sons and daughters to be servants, and some of our daughters are brought unto bondage already; neither is it in our power to redeem them; for other men have our lands and vineyards." The language savors of ancient Canaan but the description of conditions fits the time and country in which we live.

And so, from Biblical times, even to this present day there has been in all countries the problem of the cost of living, and the reason is not far to seek. It is because men seek to evade the commandment "In the eweat of thy face thou shalt eat bread and are continually trying to eat bread without working and excating that this eternal problem remains unsolved. As Bondareff, the Russian peasant, puts it in Ernest Crosby's book "Labor and Neighbor," "The rich do all they can to avoid working with their hands, and the poor to rid themselves of the necessity." The poor man says, "There is such a one who can live on other's labor; why should not I?" And he kills, steals, and cheats, in consequence. Behold now what harm can be done by white hands, and what good grimy hands can make gush forth from the earth. You spread out before the laborer the idences of your life and thus take away the force from his hands. Your way of living is for us the most cruel of offences and a shame withal. You are a hundredfold more learned and wise than I am, and for that reason you take my bread. But because you are mise you ought rather to have pity on me who am weak. It is said, "Love thy neighbor as thyself." I am your neighbor, and you are mine. Why are we coarse and untaught." Because we produce our own bread and yours too. Have we any time to study and educate ourselves." You have stoken our brains as well as our bread by trickery and violence."

That paragraph contains the crux of the whole problem. The real wage of the worker is the life be gets in return for

and educate ourselves? You have stolenour brains as well as our bread by trickery
and violence."

That porsgraph contains the crux of the
whole problem. The real wage of the
worker is the life he gets in return for
his toil. Subtract his narrow existence,
his over-long toilsome days for meagre
pay which frequently result in physical,
mental or moral disease, from that fullorbed life, which is every man's right, in
which all the faculties are developed to
their highest power. Subtract the former
from the latter, I say, and you will have
found the real cost of living.

Cone of the most saddening, but impressive utterances I ever heard came
from a gnarled old farmer of some three
score years and ten. Speaking of the
social problem, he said, "Why can't the
poor men in the cities do as I did, take
into a homestead? If they did they would
all be well-off as I am." Well-off, forsooth. For a life of toil he had received
his habor for his pains and a brief respite
on the verge of the grave—his physical
being gradually decaying, his mental
faculties undeveloped, and his soul unstarred. How far short his life had fallen,
unknown to himself, from that higher
man who as yet lives but in the poet's
dream, so beautifully described by Henry
George in this passage.

Out upon nature, in upon himself,
hack thru the mists that shroud the past,
forward into the flarkness that overhangs

the future, turns the restless desire that arises when the animal wants slumber in satisfaction. Beneath things he seeks the law; he would know how the globe was forged, and the stars were hung, and trace to their sources the springs of life. And then, as the man develops his nobler nature, there arises the desire higher yet—the passion of passions, the hope of hopes—the desire that he, even he, may somehow aid in making hie brighter and better; in destroying want and sin, sorrow and shame—Into higher, grander spheres, desire mounts and beckons, and a star that rises in the east leads him on. Lo! the pulses of the man throb with the yearnings of the god—he would aid in the process of the sins. "But, we must remember, before these high yearnings come into the heart of man "the animal"

remember, before these high yearnings come into the heart of man "the animal wants must slumber in satisfaction." In other words: "If man is both a beast and an angel, then before the wings of the angel can be developed the pange of hunger must first be satisfied."

In "The man with the hoe" Edwin Markham has vividly portrayed the condition of the mass of the world's workers, "Stolid and stunned, a brother to the ox." Thomas Hood in "The song of the shirt," has given us a picture of what it cost a woman to live. And Elizabeth Barrett Browning voices the cry of the children.

The young lambs are bleating in the meadows,

The young birds are chirping in the nest,

The young fawns are playing in the shadows,

The young flowers are blowing toward the west

But the young young children, O my brothers,

They are weeping bitterly;
They are weeping in the playtime of the others,
In the country of the free."

"How long,' they say, 'how long, O eruel nation,
Will you stand, to move the world, on a child's heart,—
Stifle down with a mailed heel its palpitation.

ation,
And tread onward to your throne
amid the mart?
Our blood splashes upward, O gold-heaper,
And your purple shows our path.
But the child's sob in the silence curses

deeper Than the strong man in his wrath.

What does it cost to live? Ask the inmates of our hospitals, jails, and insane asylums, and when you get to heaven or hell ask those who thought life was not worth the price. Read these headlines from the press. "Farmer takes his own life as a result of losses." "Aged pair saicide. Left note saying high cost of living made further struggle useless." "She suicided to stay clean says pastor." "Son of minister says he stole to avoid starving." "Mother stole children's clothing and magistrate would not punish her. "Despondent hassie turns on gas dend."

And then "27 Million is property left by Stratheoma," "\$10,000 party for an \$80,000,000 baby." True "tis better

to be:

One who has never turned his back, but marched breast forward.

Never doubted rhousts would break, Never dreamed the right were worsted, wrong would triamph.

Held we fall to rise, are baffled to fight better.

Held we full to rise, are fuffled to light better."

than to say. "Life is not worth the price," and quit. Yet when we view the tragedy of social conditions we must confess that the root of living is too high for the kind of life the mass of the wörkers are getting. But the fault is not in our stars, 'tis in ourselves."

This world is full of benuty,
As brighter reains above.

And, if we only did our duty,
It might be full of love."

This is especially true of Canada. We