

THE GREAT LABOR QUESTION.

It is a noticeable fact in the last annual Messages of the Governors of Massachusetts and Maine, that these officers concur in and announce the opinion that the problem of labor, in its relation to capital, is the great question of the day. To quote the language of the Governor of Massachusetts: "This is a question which cannot be much longer postponed."

The same opinion prevails among the great thinkers of Europe. Socialism—though the fact is denied by their Government organs—has burst out afresh, and in blood, in Russia. It is murmuring in Germany. And it burns, in its ashes, in Wales. The frenzy of Communists, the threatening aspect of the Internationale, are not the offspring of any sympathy which the masses have with disorder, or with agrarian notions. The excesses of organized labor, when it assumes an offensive shape, are only so many acts of self-defence against the oppressions and invasions of heartless and constantly encroaching privilege and capital. Driven to despair because statesmen and philanthropists and capitalists seem to neglect and forget them, the sons of toil accept such dangerous leadership as the Jack Cades of the hour offer—lunatics and demagogues, who are fitter for insane asylums and prisons than for such a solemn trust as are the interests of labor.

The time has come when the war between labor and capital cannot be safely waged much longer. Capital must be warned in time! Honest labor does not maliciously envy the granite palace nor the gilded equipage. Honest labor is patient, but not patient unto death. It demands work; fair wages; and a just chance to earn its share of the soil; and square recognition by the Government—and with this it will be content.

Look among the great number of the like which occurred last year at the Welsh strike of 1872 for a moment, and observe how, from one single convulsion, the greatest interests were imperilled. Ten thousand coal miners were reduced in their scanty wages ten per cent., and "struck." By this means 41,000 iron-workers were thrown out of employment from this one cause alone—the aggregate of unemployed reached 70,000 men and boys. The result, in its last stage, of this struggle, was the spread of the ghastly famine fever, and drunkenness and crime, in a district where health and temperance and content had before prevailed.

While industry was thus suffering, and hoarding up the seeds of hate for transmission to its posterity against capital, capital locked up its coffers and calmly waited for necessity to reduce these helpless creatures to its terms. In the single case, that of the Dowlais Works—over one million pounds sterling were left unemployed by the masters! What the meek sufferers did was—simply to suffer! They committed no trespasses; no outbreaks occurred. They associated in "Trade Unions," they held "conferences" with the masters. They heard these masters say: "We must make cheap railroad iron, and, therefore, your wages must come down!" And, finally, when the wolf stared in at every door of these unfortunates, they sullenly succumbed, and, who doubts it, with hatred in their hearts, and secret vows of vengeance against their tyrants. For, even while we write, the telegraph informs us that these Welsh strikes have just burst out afresh.

Resting on this Volcano of Hate, which is ready at any moment to belch forth ruin and destruction to society and to all the hoarded gains of selfishness, even despotic Europe is not safe. There, where monarchs and nobles rule, and where privilege is respected, the so-called powerful classes begin to feel their weakness in the fast-coming crisis of the conflict between labor and capital. To make cheap railroad iron for the benefit of tyrons and speculators, while the producers are torn by the pangs of want, to see these lords of aristocracy fairly riding over their abased necks, is not a spectacle likely to cement labor in the bond which alone can hold the dependent links of the social chain unbroken—the bond of fraternity and fellowship which binds mutual interests and inspires mutual hopes among all degrees of men. The thinkers of Europe recognize the fact, and appeal to the power of wealth and birth to tremble at these underground pulsations, and to be warned before the earthquake overtakes them.

And why should these not be in fear from this cause? Is not history full of warnings, which repeat the lesson taught by the blind Samson? This generation cannot surely hope that the doom of the oppressor, if it be provoked, will be reversed for them!

If this oppression and neglect of labor in Europe be a danger in society, how much more dangerous is such a condition with us in America. Our political institutions rest for their security on the proposition that labor must govern if we would preserve our freedom. Our vitality does not lie in the ripe rottenness of bloated capital. Our veins are fed by the blood of toil, and our liberty depends on the constant agitations of the ballot, which inspire the laborer with the spirit born of the sense of his dignity as a ruler. Take away from us this one check on privilege and monopoly, and we instantly lapse into anarchy and faction. In such case, if we survive, it must be as a despotism.

The American laborer will not long patiently

submit to witness either the Government or capital creating an impassable gulf between him and the rights and recognition which are secured other men. Monopolies cannot long, with safety—increase the price of breadstuffs by brutal freights on cereals, and combine to put up the price of fuel when it is most needed. Politicians cannot much longer—with safety—demagogue it periodically with labor; refuse it wholly such representation as capital secures, in a common Government; postpone its demands by windy promises of legislative reforms when votes are needed, and then, when secure in power, offer stones instead of bread to those whom they have thus deluded and used. Congress cannot much longer—with impunity—discriminate against labor in its subsidies and other legislation. Nor can the leaders in Labor Reform be much longer bribed to betray to capital those who confide in them.

Our fathers promptly recognized the theory which we here advance. These great men—the last of these champions was Henry Clay—clearly saw how distinctive from all other labor American labor must be, if we would insure perpetuity to our form of government. And so they really honored labor and legislated to help it. They claimed for labor a fair tariff on enterprise and wealth, when these asked legislative aid.

He who surveys the conduct of our Congress since the war, cannot shut his eyes to the fact that the tendency of our legislation has been to favor monopoly and privilege at the expense of competition and equal rights. And the observer sees the same dangerous fact in the legislation of our States. Labor has no honest, brave voice to protect it in these assemblages. The railroad is becoming the chief despot. It is absorbing our public lands and over-mastering the Government itself, shutting its ears against the cries of patriotism, deaf in its selfishness, blind in its folly, insane in its greed, defiant in its assumptions. Government infected with the contagion, thinks of nothing but immense jobs, which speedily fall into the grips of such corrupt managers as those who made up the Credit Mobilier. We are rushing too recklessly in this direction. We must stop, or encounter a collision which may be fatal to every cherished American interest. Of what avail are the rich cargo and the portly vessel, if the ship in which our all is embarked is being scuttled while we go blindly on, by the hands of desperate men?

The remedy for this increasing wrong is simply to reverse our course. Instead of fighting each other, Capital should study the labor problem in sympathy with labor. The employer should think more of the sensibilities of his hands than he does of those of his petted horses. Capital should combine not to lower, but in all possible ways to elevate labor. Such a combination of hearts and minds would soon result in the most respectful recognition of labor in all its schemes. Capital would see its interests cheerfully promoted. And in this way our legislators would be compelled to remember that our foundation as a nation rests on the children of toil.

Already murmurs are heard against a certain class of immigration. The Chinese, for illustration, must be diverted to tropical climates. Broad as are our domains, the speculator has grasped so much of them that competition for soil is becoming desperate among immigrant cultivators. We must discriminate in favor of our own race, and an outlet must be provided by capital, in the tropical portions of America, for the support of immigrant Oriental labor, so much needed in those vast and prolific regions.

To use a well-known admonition: "Beware of the locomotive when the bull rings!" Do not despise this labor problem. Do not leave labor in its despair to its own wild counsels. Dare not to scoff at it. Champion its just demands honestly. Men of position, mind, and education, let not its standard-bearers be the knaves and madmen of the Commune. Let us see these advocates for justice in all the halls of legislation, and everywhere among our large employers. This done, and a new sun will rise over the children of toil, whose influence, like the dews of heaven, shall refresh labor and capital alike.—Frank Leslie.

KIRCHER'S REMARKABLE OBSERVATIONS CONCERNING THE SUN.

The great English philosopher, Isaac Newton, and, in fact, all the astronomers from the middle ages down to the end of the last century, had a much more correct idea of the nature of the sun than was the case with William Herschel and his followers, who, in order to keep step with the current of public opinion of their time (which favored a plurality of inhabited worlds), tried to prove not only the planets but even the sun inhabitable, at any cost, even at the expense of common sense. For that purpose Herschel invented the phosphorescent cool atmosphere, which, from its under surface, gave only sufficient light and comfortable heat to the inhabitants on the solar surface, but from its upper surface projected radiations which, at a distance of over 92,000,000 miles, could develop, with the help of our atmosphere, the burning heat of our tropical zones. Notwithstanding that this idea was absurd in the extreme, and without any foundation on analogous facts positively known about the properties of matter and of heat, it was accepted on the authority of the older Herschel, who (when we render him im-

partial justice) must be considered as only a successful telescope maker, and a very poor philosopher. This absurd doctrine about the nature of the sun is, even now-a-days, not expunged from our school books on astronomy, many of which still contain the following sentence: "The sun is a dark body surrounded by a luminous atmosphere."

Thanks to the revelations of the spectroscopic, we know now that Isaac Newton was perfectly right when he estimated the temperature of the solar body to be many thousands of degrees. It is, in fact, so high that, according to his statements, we, with our most intense fires, cannot form any adequate conception of the same.

As a proof of the correctness of our assertion as to the opinions in regard to the nature of the sun during the century preceding Newton, we refer to a work, written in Latin by Father A. Kircher, and published in Amsterdam, Holland, where a translation of this book into the Dutch language appeared in 1682. It consists of two folio volumes, and is illustrated by many woodcuts and engravings on copperplate. The work is, as all works of that time were, a curious mixture of truth and untruth, filling the reader, in succession, with admiration at the patience and sound judgment of the author, and then with surprise at his credulity in recording evident errors as positive facts. The article on the sun, is one of the remarkable instances in which the author is on the side of the truth, and he even anticipates the modern ideas resulting from discoveries of two centuries later. We can only give an abbreviated translation as, like all old writings, it is too long-winded for readers of the 19th century. He says, in substance:

"The great and good Architect of the universe, has given us an image of His Divinity in a body which causes all life, motion and being, the sun, which (as the soul or mind of the universe) is, in the material world, the visible representative of the invisible God; by it He created light and order out of the chaos, and revealed to man the majesty of the invisible power to which he owes his very existence."

"Notwithstanding that we see the sun daily, we must be amazed at its beauty, and notwithstanding that it is given to no man to obtain a correct knowledge of its nature, the question arises: What does that glowing substance consist of? To this I answer that the sun is a fiery body condensed from a heavenly vapor, out of which heat and light flow off to all things, as out of an inexhaustible fountain of fire; which heat and light, combined with the seeds of the earth, produce the wonderful variety of things which we daily see here below. The sun, then, is a sphere, rough and uneven, consisting partially of liquid and solid matter, which would appear incredible, if it had not been proved by the very excellent magnifying spy-glasses, invented for the inspection of the stars. If such a glass is attached to the hole in a blind in a dark room, and turned toward the sun, an image of the same may be thrown on a white sheet; it will be seen that the surface of the sun is uneven, has shadows and lights, and is rough like the waves of an ocean, and that it varies and is not today as it was yesterday. All of which has been described by the celebrated Scheinerus. Sometimes also large spots, some of them dark, and some light, are seen, which last several days, sometimes disappear and reappear again after some days; these spots are especially seen at certain positions of the stars. All who have ever seen the large crucibles for the melting of metals, and noticed the surface of the white hot metal and the motions on its surface, can form a better idea of the appearance of the surface of the sun, whence sometimes smoke arises, as I have seen myself in Rome with Scheinerus, on the 4th of April, 1625, wherefore I have judged it appropriate to add here a picture of what I saw. That these images of shadows and faculae belong to the solar surface, is evident from common reason. We must then conclude that the sun is a heterogeneous fiery region, where changing spots, smoke and nebulae arise from the surface, now boiling up, then again disappearing, as in a fiery ocean agitated by constant motions and drift currents. All those who will further investigate these wonders of the sun will, without doubt, easily understand the origin of the comets. In order that the sun should better give its wonderful power to the other heavenly bodies, the Architect of Nature made it turn around on its axis, as recently demonstrated by the astronomers; while the earth is provided with a vapor region made from the evaporations from our earth, the rising of which moderates the too great heat of the sun, so as to give us a moderate amount."—Scientific American.

EDUCATED EYES.

Very few people, even though entirely uneducated, can look upon a fine antique statue without being impressed by it. Take, for instance, the classic Apollo, as he stands in the haughty and magnificent strength of young manhood, having just sent the dealing arrow into the heart of his victim—who can gaze upon this figure unmoved? For not only are the beautiful, symmetrical proportions of a perfect human form presented, but there is a significance, a meaning in the attitude and expression which is apparent to the most careless observer.

So forcibly and clearly does this statue re-

veal itself to the sense of right, that a strong and lasting impression is produced on the mind; and in proportion as the person beholding it is able to perceive and appreciate its beauty and merit, just in such proportion has his taste become cultivated and refined. For the emotions have been aroused, the imagination awakened by the contemplation of this hero, so superbly free and dauntless; our sympathies are given to him and his cause, and when we turn away and seek to be ourselves again, we find that it is not possible, at least for a time, to descend to our former level—we have been uplifted to a more refined atmosphere, and prefer to remain there.

It is chiefly because the Belvidere Apollo, with other renowned statues, is fixed forever in one significant and impressive attitude and expression that uneducated eyes can perceive its beauty. The same eyes look upon, without seeing, the loveliness of earth and air, of water and fire, those elements which are constantly forming for us the most beautiful pictures and forms, ever new, never tiring. How much they lose, those dark, half-blinded eyes. I see their owners rush through the crowded streets, hastening to daily toil in the morning, to daily rest in the evening, seeing nothing but the grim pavements, or the faces of other moles like themselves; while overhead the fleecy clouds go by, veining and softening the azure dome, and in the far eastward the morning sun grows like a princely ruby of the Orient, or in the far westward lights half the heavens with scarlet and gold, and softly fades to rose and amber, and gently dies away into a pale purple flush before the rising moon.

To those who are able to see, life is never wearisome, seldom sad. To them all nature speaks of beauty, of hope, of life. It is for them the glorious sun is shining, and dew-drops glitter in his rays; yes, even in the crowded city a little patch of grass or climbing vine will make a picture for their eyes—a picture where light and shadow and reflected lights—chiaroscuro and points of brilliancy—are not wanting; where even bizarre and incongruous architecture is softened and meliorated by the misty atmosphere into a stately picturesqueness, while the thronging, moving human forms constantly appeal to the imagination and the heart.

Such a one—the owner of the educated eyes—on a journey, is like a child; all things are new, all beautiful. Shut him into a crowded ship's cabin during a storm, and while others are fretting miserably he will spend a pleasant hour in admiring the delicate complexion of a girl, whose rounded cheek displays the rose and the lily blended, that the old poets were so fond of describing; or the silken tresses, like spun gold, or like the glossy raven's wing, of some fair lady. Put him on deck in the same storm, and the terrible sublimity of air and ocean will fill his spirit with unspeakable emotion. He wanders over a desolate moorland where another would feel solitary indeed, and rejoices in the soft, broad sketches of color and infinite expanse that the purple heather below and the cool, hazy sky above present to him. A lichen-covered boulder by the roadside furnishes to him both a resting place and a picture, while the delicate ferns spreading in its shadow are but added objects of beauty and pleasure.

Others value a gem for the amount of money it represents, he for its intrinsic beauty; for the clear translucency of the diamond, the flawless, pure opacity of the pearl, the lovely color of the emerald, the ruby, the amethyst. It is worth while to be a beautiful woman when a man of educated eyes is near—to be a magnificent man when a woman's educated eyes observe—they can only see and appreciate true beauty; they only are not deceived by the superficial and false.

And it is not merely objective beauty that makes an impression upon these gifted ones, these observers; hours of reflection come when beautiful things once seen must be recalled by memory. Then the mind forms a picture and dwelt upon it till a train of thought is aroused; the relations of attractiveness to life, to happiness, to progress, are carefully reasoned out and true ideal or subjective beauty is perceived.

He who educates his eyes elevates himself constantly; he adds world upon world to that sphere in which he was originally born. He sees and knows the life of every created thing. The animals, to him, are not mere brute beasts, but a strange and wonderful race of creatures which, indeed, cannot speak like man, but who possess domestic and social affections, and are capable of emotions of education and progression.

And for him the flowers bloom, the lovely flowers with their often exquisite aroma, their grace and fragility. Of what use, indeed, are these beautiful blossoms but to arouse pleasurable and therefore elevating sentiments in the mind of an observer? So to him the vegetable world is closely connected with the human; almost he can believe when examining the life of certain trees and plants that they also are sentient, they also have some consciousness of existence. He who has wondered over the sensitive plant, shrinking even before it is touched, can comprehend the myth of the mandrake that shrieks aloud, "Die! die!" when it is torn from its mother earth. That which to others is but an absurd fable, to him is the key which unlocks the archives of an unknown world and permits his all-observing eyes and questioning, pen-

trating mind to study the hidden lore of nature.

Not only do men and women of educated eyes add world upon world to the one sphere that contents the unobserving, but by interesting themselves in the mode of life, the duties and enjoyments of all living creatures, they fully use every moment of existence and multiply a thousand fold that little span of seventy years which the multitude find too long.

LONDON TRADES.

There is one quiet trade in the Metropolis earning high wages and on a large scale, that the public little notice, i.e., the coachmakers, and I believe it has as many branches, if not more, than the manufacturing of a pin. At this season of the year the whole of the branches are very busy, and I learn that already the trade gives indication of an unusual briskness, and foreign orders particularly for the East Indies and our colonies, are coming in fast. This augmentation of trade rebounds into the harness trades, for where a carriage is "set up," or a new one ordered, a new set of harness is bound to accompany it, and none but those who have paid a harnessmaker's bill can comprehend the wages profit of a suit for "four-in-hand," "a pair," or a "brougham."

From leather to Caxton!—and here typists and machinists have experienced a sudden rise no one can account for. In the early part of February, "Ben Johnson," and other hostels of that family about Fleet street, were full-handed, and all a printer had to do if he were pushed was to send up to these trade houses of call; but lo! all at once, and without any apparent cause, neither typists nor machinists are to be found anywhere, from Farringdon street to Chancery Lane. I would take an affidavit the tribe have not become "Good Templars!" The late strike in Edinburgh, has withdrawn, I know, many non-society printers from London, but the number is not sufficient to account for the great call for hands in the Metropolis, and we must set the reason down to a flourishing state of the trade, and which augurs well for the year.

The tan-pits and the whole of the Bermondsey leather trades, are very active; and were it not for the immense imports of foreign, but badly tanned leathers, our English leather would be worth its weight in gold; and it may not be foreign to the subject to observe that not many years since there was a heavy excise tax on our tan-pits, and Parliament removed this impost in order that leather for boots should be cheapened. I have some remembrance of the leather merchants being the most noisy promoters of this benevolent trade transaction, and I can appreciate their efforts by having to pay 100 per cent. more for my boots and leather to repair them now than I did before the leather tax was repealed. An old flesh-killer I know informs me that he gets but a little more for his hides at Leadenhall than he did in the time of the tax. This brings us to the wages question and the price of labor. Well, here I find that wages always ruled high throughout the trade, and except the jaspers, there has been but little increase; and this being so—to speak of a trade—there's nothing like leather.

I next arrive at leather manufactured, and, upon this important emporium of labor I have to report some particulars that I glean from a useful and accredited trade organ, "St. Crispin." The Amalgamated Society of Shoemakers have given the masters notice of their intention to cease work on April 7th next unless the following conditions are acceded: an advance of wages to range from 3d. to 1s. 3d. per pair, and a further rise up to 3d. extra on work done at the workman's home. Added to this, the masters are to find hem, flax, wax, paste, hairs, awls, candle-light, tacks, &c. Altogether, I am informed, this increase will not be far short of 25 per cent. It is not my province to observe upon this somewhat alarming addition to the price of boots, but I may here remark that this advance refers more to the interests of the light than the hard wearers; and would it but halt here the laboring classes would not feel the "shoe pinch." It so occurs, however, St. Crispin is on to strong boots, and the men are going "to demand a rise in spring; and their tactics will be to strike all the shops, that successfully held out on the last occasion." I am not yet informed of the increase of this branch of the bootmaking, but from some trade omnibus lines, it will tell very severely on other branches of labor. An extra levy on the trades unionists of St. Crispin, of 6d. per week, is already levied, to meet the contingency of a struggle between the masters and men; but, unless the wearers of shoes will accommodate the masters by going barefooted, labor will be triumphant and five shillings in the pound will be added to our clothing.

The condition of the remainder of our chief trades I must summarize for sake of space.

The following are well on for work:—Engineers, ironworkers, steam boiler-makers, cabinetmakers, carvers and gilders, printers, bookbinders, plumbers, glass-makers, asphalters, hatters and shipbuilders: whilst those somewhat languid are silversmiths, engravers and goldsmiths.

Hope is the ruddy morning ray of joy, recollection is its golden tinge; but the latter is wont to sink 'mid the dews and dusky shades of twilight, and the bright blue day which the former promises breaks indeed, but in another world, and with another sun.