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## EIGHT HOURS.

Progress of the Great International Labor Movement.

Great preparations are being made in all the countries of Europe for the 1st of May. We give here a short synopsis of the movement in some of them:

### GREAT BRITAIN.

The workmen of Great Britain were sorely disappointed this week when Parliament laid over the consideration of the Eight hour bill for April 15. The Tory Government, no doubt, has not made any friends among labor men by this unexpected and unnecessary delay, and the gigantic demonstrations that will be held on May 1 will surely teach these hypocritical politicians a healthy lesson. Besides the great meeting at Hyde Park, which the Social Democratic Federation and both the "new" and the "old" trades unions of London will attend to the number of at least 500,000, there will be parades and mass meetings in Liverpool, Manchester, Nottingham, Leeds, Cardiff, Yorkshire, Edinburgh, Glasgow, and even in Dublin. The miners, the dockers, the gasworkers, the railway men, metal workers, spinners and many agricultural laborers will join in celebrating for the second time the great day of labor's rest and unification on May 1 this year.

The arrangements for the Hyde Park meeting are in the hands of the London Trades Council, in which over 180 large organizations are represented.

### GERMANY.

Since the anti-Socialist law has been dropped by the dominant powers in Germany the labor movement has become more prominent than it ever was before. The eight hour demonstration will be universal, although the executive body of the Socialist party has decided to observe Sunday, May 3, as the official day for the demonstrations and mass meetings. Yet, a large number of trades unionists have resolved not to work on May 1, so as to more distinctly express their solidarity with the workmen of all other countries who will not labor on that day. The reason which actuated the leaders of the Socialist party in agreeing upon May 3 was that there are several strikes in many large cities, and trade is dull generally throughout the Empire; therefore it would not be desirable to increase the number of days lost through lack of employment. Another reason has probably been that any friction with the military should be avoided, for it is well known that the Kaiser and his capitalistic abettors would gladly seize the opportunity of tapping some of the large arteries of the labor movement and smothering in gore the terrible enemy whose masses are destined to crush the remnants of feudalism in the "Fatherland" sooner or later. The greatest apprehension on the part of the ruling class is felt for the action of the mine workers, who, with those of all other countries, will insist upon the introduction of the eight hour rule. To dampen their ardor the preliminary step has been taken of discharging every one of the delegates from the Saar District to the Miners' International Congress in Paris. This, however, will have an effect directly opposite to that intended.

### FRANCE.

Meetings are being held in many parts of France, preparatory to the great demonstration on May 1. In Paris the Socialists and Trades Unionists of all shades and colors will unite on that date to show their strength and determination. There is not a town in the French Republic where the posters and circulars of the eight hour men have not been placed upon the walls and distributed among the laboring people. Encouraging reports are coming from all the towns where labor is organized. Immense parades will take place at Paris, Lyons, Marseilles, Bordeaux, Bayonne, Rouen, Armentieres, Roanne, Roubaix, Troyes, Beziers, Aix, Lille, Calais, Charlieu, Revin, Nantes, and many other centers of industry. Among the best organized are the mine workers, of whom not one will work on the great International Labor Day.

### AUSTRALIA.

The Australian Labor Federation has almost completed its arrangements for general demonstrations throughout the colonies for May 1. They expect the opposition of the Mutual Defense Association of Employers whose members have pledged a capital of \$500,000 to resist the demands of organized labor; but there is hardly any

doubt that the eight hour day will be established for many trades not yet enjoying that boon. Foremost among the latter are the journeymen bakers' unions, whose members are still working 10 and 12 hours per day. In Brisbane they have requested an open conference between delegates from the Employers' and Master Bakers' Associations and the Journeymen Bakers' Unions and Australian Labor Federation. Several conferences were held, at which the District Council of the Australian Labor Federation and the Federated Employers' Union were represented, but, according to last reports, a satisfactory result has not yet been reached. The bosses are apparently greatly enraged at the persistence of the journeymen. One of the journeymen's delegates at the conference, who had been especially emphatic in urging the justice of the journeymen's demands, has been discharged.

### SPAIN.

The initiative in the eight hour movement of the Spanish workmen has been taken by the Socialist party of that country. They have appealed to all labor organizations to unite on May 1, to demonstrate to their capitalistic oppressors that they know the cause of the miserable condition of the laboring masses, and that they are determined to rid themselves of class legislation and all other unjust conditions. The appeal closes with the words: "It is the duty of the international proletariat to strike the severest blow to the robber class, to make the infamous structure shake in the very foundation upon which their thieving system is resting."

### Why Big men Have Little Wives.

There is a very general and ancient impression that big men in choosing wives prefer small women. At first glance this would appear to be true, because the number of big men with little wives is certainly in an overwhelming majority, as we see them. In the five years I have held my office I have learned a thing or two through the medium of the marriage license office, and it is my impression that it is not that big men prefer little women, but that little women prefer big men, and it is the experience of the worldwise that what a woman wants and starts out to get she generally captures.—Interview in St. Louis Globe-Democrat.

### Progress and Poverty.

The cause of poverty is found in the monopolization of natural bounties, private control of railroads, contraction of the currency and the unjust apportionment of burdens and rewards.

According to the tenth census the average yearly earnings of American labor decreased from a little more than \$400 in 1870 to a little more than \$300 in 1880, yet the wealth of the nation increased during that period more than a billion dollars a year.

In 1850 the farmers of this nation owned three-fifths of its wealth, in 1880 they owned but one-third of its wealth, and to-day they own but one-fifth of its wealth. Yet the farmers are still paying the 80 per cent. of the taxes paid by them in 1850. The farmers of proud Iowa have sold their products at a loss since 1880, except when other western states suffered universal failure, and the mortgage indebtedness on the homes in Iowa now aggregate \$300,000,000.—Labor Commissioner Sovereign of Iowa.

### THE LABOR PRESS.

"In one of the Chinese provinces containing 2,000,000 people there has been only one murder in thirty-four years. But then that is a pagan country. In this Christian nation of 68,000,000 we manage to make a record of 3,000 murders in one year—and no war to help, either."—Colorado Workman.

"Paternal government," "autonomy of the State, etc., is the holy cry of the farmers' enemies! Well, so we get just and equal laws we are not caring whether they come from daddy or Uncle Sam."—The Unionist.

It only costs \$6.50 to ride 1,000 miles in Australia, where the government owns and operates the railroads. Monopolists are down on such socialism, but the common people of America are praying that its coming may be hastened here.—Ex.

The organized carpenters are hunting for Louis Pabadeon, who stole the funds of carpenters' union No. 10, Detroit. He is probably now in Chicago, and is 5 feet 7 inches, 145 pounds, sandy complexion, heavy mustache, hazel blue eyes, shows a guilty countenance and always complains of sickness. His right hand is crippled.

## THE MALTHUSIAN THEORY.

Thoughts on the Malthus Doctrine by a Reformer.

The truth is nearly always unpopular and unpleasant with the greater number of people. In economics no men are more bitterly reviled than Darwin and Malthus. The latter gentleman taught a principle that population is kept down by the limit of subsistence matter in existence; that in proportion as the means of subsistence increase the population increases, and makes the struggle for existence as severe as before. Although this is a theory with many apparently correct ideas it is in many respects defective. But how few people give Malthus the credit he deserves. It is true that he was a cranky old minister of the gospel whose vision of economic sciences was largely obstructed by his belief in a supreme Being who took up most of his time in seeing that some people should starve while others should roll in luxury, subsisting off the labor of those who should starve. The statement of Malthus in reference to population increasing according to the means of subsistence is probably correct, but because it is unpleasant few can be found to believe in it. In casting this idea aside they thoughtlessly cast also away the good of his work. The idea is not so horrible after all, and the confinement of the growth of population to the measure of subsistence matter imposes no pain or hardship upon any of the human family. This is a truth which should be realized and admitted, because blinding oneself to unpleasant truths delays the march of progress.

Some people accept Malthus with pleasure because he teaches by implication an untrue doctrine. The wealthy see in it an excuse for their sins and Malthus is their patron saint. The poor reject one of his ideas because it is unpleasant to them; the rich accept one of his ideas because to them it is a palatable untruth. People are perverse, and a dozen different interest will hold a dozen different views. The reason why the rich like Malthus is because to them the whole explanation as to the causes of poverty lies in his theory; the theory is complimentary to the rich and condemnatory to the poor. The untrue portion of Malthus' work is not in his statement regarding subsistence and population but in the implication that poverty and unequal distribution of wealth is caused by it. Malthus has skillfully avoided touching on this question. The limitations of subsistence should bear equally on all, but they bear only on a certain class. Malthus has never explained why it is that out of a given amount of subsistence matter some men have as much as a thousand men, without having laboured nearly as much as one man; nor has he explained how it is that when subsistence increases sufficiently to support a dozen extra human beings, a few who are already alive snatch up the increase and crowd the new comers to the wall.

The complexity of our industrial system permit of a thousand petty robberies whereby the honest man is made victim to the unscrupulous man. Malthus has not explained this away, and therein consists an untruth of Malthus by implication; this the rich accept; the truth about subsistence and population is one of the good points of his doctrine which the poor reject. Thus truth, when unpleasant, goes to the wall.

### Do Plants Think?

A story of one of the most interesting freaks of vegetable life is told by Elwood Cooper, of Santa Barbara. As coming from him, and moreover having happened to him, the story cannot be anything but strictly in accordance with facts. Verily we may ask ourselves do plants think? Mr. Cooper believes they do, and here are some of his reasons for thinking so:

"Through Mr. Cooper's garden there ran some years ago a sewer made out of redwood timber. This sewer was again cased by an outside sewer, which in course of time had partially decayed. Across the sewer there was built a brick wall many feet high and in such a way that it was pierced by the inner sewer, which it inclosed tightly, while the outside sewer casing ended abruptly outside the wall. As I said, the outside sewer casing has in course of time decayed, and a eucalyptus tree standing some sixty feet away had taken advantage of this and sent one of its roots to the coveted spot in as direct a line as possible. Here the root entered the outside sewer and followed its course as far as it

could; at last it came to the wall which shut off its course, and here it could go no further, the inside sewer being perfectly tight. But on the other side of the wall the sewer and its double casing continued, and this the eucalyptus tree evidently knew. How to get there? Some three feet high in the brick wall there was a little hole an inch or two in diameter and this the eucalyptus tree was aware of, as its big root began to climb the dry wall and face the sun and wind until it found the hole, through which it descended on the other side and entered the sewer again and follows it along as formerly.

Was ever such instinct known before, or are similar traits in plants of daily occurrence, only we are not aware of them? How did the tree know of the hole in the wall? How did it know that the sewer was on the other side? Did it smell, and if it did, how could it direct the root to go and find the place with such precision? There is, of course, another explanation of this curious phenomenon, which, as we might say, the roots of any plant grow always and unerringly in the direction of its food, just as the eucalyptus tree did do."—Bakersfield Californian.

### Returned With Thanks.

It is a great mistake for the literary aspirant to imagine that his returned manuscript has any offense, or that his music, if he has strided Pegasus, cannot soar. What he must do is to sail forth with it again and again until it reaches a favored port, which it will surely do if it has the requisite merit, somewhere and at some date. President Lincoln used to say, when he was trying faithfully and with great diligence to place the various able men who were presented to him for the civil service and for the army, that it was a very difficult matter to get the square pegs in the round holes and the round pegs in the square ones. And it is just this difficulty which confronts the writer for periodicals and magazines. No matter how experienced he may be he will often fail before he brings his commodity to the market which waits for it.

But editors do not wish to be cruel or hard-hearted, however much they may seem so to the unpurged and unfledged writer. The very best and most famous of them have often told me that one of the saddest and most thankless duties they have to perform is to return a contribution that for some good reason does not prove to be available. When I once wrote some verses treating this necessity humorously, I had to apply to three editors in succession before I could get them printed, the first two assuring me sorrowfully that the matter was quite too serious to be treated with levity.—Joel Benton in Ladies' Home Journal.

### The Ring and the Trust.

Combination is found to be a mightier principle in the economic game than competition. As well oppose handicraft to machinery as the scattered efforts of individuals, with their limited resources and consequent lack of staying power, to the trust, which knows how to control every avenue of transportation, to undersell its rivals and to hinder them from receiving supplies and from loading or unloading the goods they may have in hand. Under the decreed commercial regime of the Middle Ages prices and qualities were fixed, in a rude way, doubtless, by the whole community acting through its rulers. When the "ring and the trust" have spread like a network over the land—as in regard to some commodities they have done already—prices and qualities will be determined, not by the people, who can but wait with oriental submissiveness till the fiat has gone forth, but by syndicates representing—shareholders! A small oligarchy of wealth, at the summit of which are enthroned the great railway kings and their satellites, will have thus put the free American democracy under its feet. Free? Why, certainly, free to vote for the candidates sent to congress by the omnipotent "trustees," whose commercial mandates will there be converted into law.—Rev. William Barry, in Forum.

I have recently been in the west of Ireland. People are starving there, while tens of thousands of acres of food-providing soil are given up to huge sheep-walks. In the summer months over ten thousand labourers from these very districts will emigrate to Great Britain to work at starvation rates, to the detriment of labour interests over here, while employment for ten times ten thousand could be provided for them near their own homes, if the land would be permitted to give them work."—Michael Davitt.