

## THE WAGE-EARNER'S VALUE.

By CHARLES ST. MOORE.

The average duration of the life of a horse is about 25 years, according to Buffon, and as careful statistics upon this subject have not been gathered from every corner of the globe we accept this as approximately correct. The average duration of the life of the tender-foot who mounts a bucking broncho is about two seconds, and possibly this is one of the reasons why all the Life Assurance Companies fight shy of Jockies as proponents. The general average of the life of mankind is about 42 years, but so carefully and accurately have the Companies collected statistics as to the longevity of individuals of every civilized race, age and occupation, that they can figure to a decimal the average expectancy of the lad of 14 years, the philosopher of 60, or of the matron fat, fair and forty. The value of a horse is gauged by its age and the amount of pecuniary profit or pleasure derivable from its strength and endurance or speed. Circumstances and locality also play an important part in the valuing of the animal. In New York or San Francisco a Maud S. would be worth a whole band of mules, but in the Rockies or the Sierras one sure-footed mule is of ten times greater value than a whole stud of Maud S's. As a general axiom it may be laid down that there is no value to the life of the donkey and the dude, and when dead their hides are scarcely worth tanning. A Hoe printing press; a type-writing machine, a steam engine or other piece of machinery is of a certain value to its owner while in good workable condition, but immediately the different pieces are completely worn out and broken down there is only a scrap iron value to them. The owner may keep patching them up; putting a new screw here; a piston rod there; and a rivet somewhere else; but eventually the machine collapses, and by the process of evolution and exchange and barter they

pass at a much impaired valuation into other hands.

In like manner the wear and tear of life affect man. He is patched up from time to time by the doctor, but all the while there is more depletion of the system than building up of the constitution, and when least expected unmistakable characters are traced on the wall; this wonderful piece of mechanism collapses, and the poor old lump of clay by a similar process of devolution is passed on to the lugubrious undertaker to place in a suitable casket, who in turn hands over casket and contents to the sexton, who transfers it to the worms in the six by three little plot, where presently roses and violets or nettles and stinkwort bloom and thrive.

When the iron machinery collapsed the proprietor had already, it is more than probable, by its aid accumulated more than enough to pay the cost price and interest thereon in addition to a handsome profit; and *he* did not by the process of devolution follow in the wake of the scrap iron; he, himself remained, and hence could purchase new and possibly improved appliances and his income, need not necessarily diminish from the effects of the breakdown. Not so with this wonderfully beautiful piece of mechanism, man, the human machine; for when his frail body lost its motive power, machinery and proprietor collapsed together, and a lasting and heavy loss was sustained by those whose bread and butter were derived from, through or by this now utterly worthless piece of clay; in reality not even as valuable as the scrap-iron.

The junkstore will buy the scrap-iron, but men have to be paid handsomely to put the defunct clay out of sight. Not only did love and affection cease on the part of the human machine when the heart refused to beat—and, God knows, even where there is wealth galore, when love and affection depart, the world is blank,