

## THE WAGE QUESTION.

SOME years ago, when the "labor question" had not nearly acquired the prominence it now has, a thoughtful writer declared that in the near future the chief contentions in society would not be so much about political institutions and civil rights as about the relations and respective rights of employers and employees. The present state of things in Europe and in this country fully verifies this prediction. The subjects about which the people, as a whole, are most deeply concerned are not political, but industrial. In England, and Scotland, and Ireland there has been an extension of the right of suffrage, yet this concession to a million or more of persons who previously had no voice in electing members of Parliament and shaping the political policy of Great Britain created only a slight ripple on the surface of public opinion and was accepted without excitement and without any special manifestation of gladness or rejoicing by the industrial classes, to whom it was extended.

They are more deeply concerned about their material condition, about the wages they receive and the securing of permanent and remunerative employment, than whether or not they have the right to vote at elections for members of Parliament or for county or municipal officers.

So, too, in Germany and in France, the majority of the people of those countries concern themselves far less about the political institutions under which they live than about the questions which immediately relate to their industrial condition and the securing of the largest and most certain return for their daily labor.

The same fact confronts us in this country. Convince the voter in the United States that the placing of any political party in power would add twenty-five cents per day to his wages without any increase of time or of the work he is required to do, and the popular vote would immediately turn in favor of that party.

It is plainly the industrial question, in one or another of its forms, that determines how both employers and employees, or, as they are commonly styled, capitalists and workingmen, shall cast their votes. The questions about duties on imports from foreign countries, about a tariff or a free-trade policy, the questions connected with our shipping and commercial interests, our railroads and our banking interests, our national debt and the manner of paying it, the questions about the rights and powers of corporate

companies and the extent to which those rights and powers should be limited, and like questions, all turn upon the manner in which the different policies proposed by opposing parties will affect the interests of capitalists and wage-payers on the one hand and those of workingmen or wage-workers on the other. The wage question, or, in other words, the question how wage-workers may assert and maintain their rights as against wage-payers, has practically become *the* question of our age.

In the thoughts which we propose to present on this subject we have no intention to attempt to discuss the relation of capital and labor in the abstract. Countless such disquisitions have been written and published, yet seemingly to very little purpose. We doubt whether they have ever really influenced, to any important extent, the action either of employers or of employees in the conflicts which are constantly occurring between them.

The question of wages is a practical one. It cannot and will not be solved by references to abstract principles of political economy or social philosophy, but by concrete facts. It is a question, too, which has become the question of the day in its relation to all temporal or material interests.

This may seem to some persons a very mercenary way of looking at the subject. Yet it is not. At least it is the natural way, and the way the subject is actually looked at by the vast majority of persons. "All that a man hath he will give for his life," and where wife and children are also concerned, he will give it all the more readily. It is mere mockery to concede to a man the right to go to the polls and vote for or against candidates for offices, whilst he himself is virtually a pauper living from hand to mouth, and dependent on the will of his employer whether he and his family shall have bread to eat or not.

The right to live, and to live as a being endowed with reason and will should live, comes first in the natural order. Political rights follow both in the order of nature and of relative importance. Political rights, too, are simply means to secure certain ends, and one of these ends is that of protecting the weak against the strong, the feeble many against the powerful few, in the efforts of the former to secure a certain and a decent livelihood.

We are well aware that many persons will probably dissent from these statements when made in the broad and naked manner in which we have put them. Yet facts of every-day occurrence around us prove their truth. The attempts made from time to time to organize a "labor party" in the United States are all based upon the belief that the "wage question" is of greater practical importance to those who work for wages than any question

of politics which divides the people of the United States into Republicans and Democrats.

These continual attempts to form a labor party may be well-advised or ill-advised; but whichever they be, the attempts themselves show that in the minds of those who make them the wage question dwarfs and subordinates to itself all mere political questions.

And, to adduce evidence of much wider range, it is an indisputable fact that of the many millions of persons who have migrated to this country from Ireland, Germany and other European countries, the vast majority sought our shores less from political reasons than from the hope of improving their material and industrial condition. It was not—at least not chiefly—because they had few or no political rights or privileges in their native countries, but because their labor was poorly recompensed and they hoped to better their condition, in this respect, in the United States.

The truth of this statement is confirmed by the fact that many of these emigrants cherish the hope of returning to their native countries as soon as they can acquire a competency sufficient to enable them to live there in comfort. Moreover, it is a fact that thousands of the native-born citizens of the United States, if remunerative employment and personal safety are assured to them, are willing and ready to leave this country and go to foreign countries, with little or no concern for the differences which such action will make in their political rights and privileges.

Were other proof needed of the prominent position which the wage question now occupies, it would be furnished by the rapidity with which associations of "trades-unions" of various kinds have been organized, and the vast numbers of persons whom they have enrolled. There is scarcely any form of industrial activity in which the wage-workers have not formed one of these societies. Of late years, too, efforts have been made to combine all these associations together into a common confederacy or union. And these efforts seem to be succeeding. One form of this movement,—that of the "Knights of Labor,"—if recent statements respecting their numerical strength can be relied on, have upwards of three hundred thousand members on their rolls.

The wage question is confounded by some persons with communistic and socialistic theories. But this is a mistake. It is true that socialistic and communistic agitators endeavor to win over the wage-workers to their support. But they have met with little success thus far. It is also true that among the wage-workers there are some who are avowed socialists or communists. But the number of these is few. There is not only no necessary connection between the efforts of wage-workers to better their con-

dition, as regards wages and hours of work, and the crazy dreams of socialists and communists, but their fundamental ideas are antagonistic.

Communism aims at the abolition of individual ownership of property. Its leading idea is that individuals have no exclusive personal right in anything they possess; no right in fact to possess and enjoy anything exclusively; that of right there is no such thing as individual ownership, but that all things should be owned in common, and be distributed to individuals to use and enjoy according to rules and regulations of the entire community or of officials which the commune should elect and appoint. The phrase "property is robbery" states correctly the fundamental notion of communism.

Socialism contemplates such a reconstruction of human society that all human productive action shall be regulated by the State. It would make, were it carried into practical effect, each individual a mere atom of the entire social aggregate, having no rights apart from or independent of that aggregate, and without personal freedom or personal choice as to what he shall do, when he shall work, or to what use the fruits of his labor shall be put.

But the wage question contemplates nothing of this kind. Its fundamental intention is summed up in the phrase, "a fair day's wages for a fair day's work." It does not aim at robbing employers of even a single dollar of property which they have individually acquired. It does not deny to them the right of increasing their possessions fairly and honestly, and without injustice, fraud, or oppression of their employees.

Taken as a whole, wage-workers have no sympathy with socialistic or communistic theories. Wage-workers are just as anxious to acquire individual property as are wage-payers; just as anxious to have houses and lands of their own, which shall be homes for them and their families; just as anxious to lay up money "against a rainy day," and enough of it to enable them to live comfortably and raise their children decently, and give them a fair start in life when they have grown up.

There are exceptions to this, of course; but these exceptions do not affect the truth of what we have said. Wage-workers look at the subject in a practical way. They know that their labor is the active producing cause of the wealth their employers acquire, and they feel that it is but just that their labor should be fairly compensated.

Until a few years ago, the wage question in the United States was one of easy practical solution in most cases. The demand for labor was such that if a wage-worker was dissatisfied with his work or with his wages, he could easily obtain other employment that

would remunerate him ; then, too, there was a constant movement from the position of wage-worker to that of wage-payer.

But this is no longer the case except to a very limited extent. The influx of emigrants from European countries, and the substitution of machinery for hand-work, have increased the supply of laborers beyond the demand for them. Consequently, when a wage-worker relinquishes a situation, or is discharged from it, he usually finds it very difficult to obtain work elsewhere.

Then, too, the rapid accumulation of capital in enormous amounts and the concentration of all our most important industries into the hands of a few persons or incorporated companies, closely united in syndicates or combinations, which exercise an irresistible power over individual action outside of these combinations, make it extremely difficult for wage-workers to exercise any influence, or to have any voice in deciding what wages they shall receive or how long they shall work. There is scarcely any mutuality between wage-workers and their employers. The wages which the former shall receive and the latter shall pay, is no longer a question for free discussion and free bargain and sale. The question is practically decided by the employers looking at the subject from their own point of view, and without reference to their employees, their condition, rights, or interests. The only liberty the wage-workers commonly can exercise, is the liberty of working or not working for the wages and on the terms which are prescribed by their employers.

Under these circumstances, a vast amount of the talk about wage-workers having a right and being free to put their own price upon their work, and to sell their labor or not as they may choose, is simply not pertinent to the question in the shape it has practically assumed. It is true in principle, but it is a principle which the vast majority of wage-workers are entirely unable to avail themselves of under existing circumstances. Naturally and in justice they have the right to exercise and enjoy this freedom, but, circumstanced as they are, they have not the power necessary to its exercise and enjoyment. The superior controlling power of combinations of capitalists and the needy condition of wage-workers unite to create this inability.

In the majority of instances, therefore, it is sheer mockery to say that wage-workers are free to accept or reject the terms and conditions that are proffered to them. As well say that the man who is loaded down with chains and shackles is at liberty to run—if he can. The man who yields up his money under the compulsion of a knife at his throat or a bludgeon brandished over his head, has no true freedom of choice or action. So, too, with the

wage-worker who receives wages prescribed to him under the condition that he accept those wages or starve.

We shall indulge in no rhetorical enlargement upon this truth. We simply state the naked fact. To us it appears to be as arbitrary and tyrannical an exercise of superior power as the act of a slave-owner who prescribes to his slaves the length of time they shall toil and the amount of work they shall do, without regard to their comfort, their health, and their strength.

The slave has the liberty of working or not working, subject to the penalty of being lashed and tortured if he refuses to work. In very many instances the wage-worker has like liberty, subject to the penalty of starvation or pauperism for himself and his family. If he refuses to accept the terms of his employer, the only alternatives left him are—to starve, to become a tramp, or a public pauper.

No one who looks actual facts squarely in the face and seriously considers them can controvert this statement or think that we have spoken too strongly. Our daily newspapers are constantly describing the manner of living and the wages paid to hundreds of thousands of wage-workers in our large cities and towns, and in mines and quarries in the country. Are these wage-workers actually *free* to sell their labor for the price they put upon it? Are they *free* to work or not to work for the wages paid by their employers? To ask these questions is to answer them.

Let us look at the actual facts of the wage question as it stands connected with some of the leading industries of Pennsylvania.

The mining of iron ore furnishes employment to a very large number of persons, and provides the raw material for one of our most important industries. What the actual condition is of the men who toil in those mines, and what wages they receive, may be inferred from the following remarks on the subject, made by the Secretary of Internal Affairs of Pennsylvania, in his official report upon the industries of the State :

“The mining of iron ore does not afford constant employment, the average amounting to but thirty-six weeks per annum. This allows scarcely sufficient wages per week, for the run of the year, to maintain a single individual. How those wage-workers having families to maintain can accomplish that difficult task is a problem in social economics that can be solved only by those who have been in similar circumstances. Many miners wear belts instead of suspenders to support the weight of their pantaloons, and one of these, in reply to the question asked him relative to his ability to buy food, replied: ‘Lord bless you, we don’t always eat when we are hungry, *we just tighten our belts.*’”

To show what is the average actual condition of the wage-workers in the iron-ore mines in Pennsylvania, we give two tables

taken from the official report on Industrial Statistics of Pennsylvania for the year 1884. These tables are not made up from returns from any particular mine, or from the mines of any particular locality, but by averaging the entire aggregate of returns from the whole State.

The first of these tables, entitled "Theoretical Wages," is an exhibit of the wages, per week and per year, of wage-workers in and about iron-ore mines, on the basis of constant employment during the whole year.

TABLE I.—*Iron-Ore Mines ; Theoretical Wages.*

Employees.	Daily Wages.	Weekly Wages.	Yearly Wages.
Miners, . . . . .	\$1 25	\$7 50	\$390
Miners' helpers, . . . . .	1 17	7 02	365
Engineers, . . . . .	1 30	7 80	406
Foremen, . . . . .	1 75	10 50	546
Blacksmiths, . . . . .	1 40	8 40	437
Laborers, . . . . .	95	5 70	296
Boys, . . . . .	50	3 00	156
All others, . . . . .	1 25	7 50	390

The foregoing exhibit is made up by tabulating returns made by the employers of labor in the iron-ore mines of Pennsylvania. But when this exhibit is tested and scaled down to the amounts actually paid by them to their employees, the figures reduce themselves to those contained in the following table :

TABLE II.—*Iron-Ore Mines ; Exhibit of Actual Wages.*

Employees.	Weekly Wages.	Annual Wages.
Miners, . . . . .	\$4 50	\$270
Miners' helpers, . . . . .	4 20	250
Engineers, . . . . .	4 70	281
Foremen, . . . . .	6 30	378
Blacksmiths, . . . . .	5 04	302
Laborers, . . . . .	3 41	205
Boys, . . . . .	1 80	108
All others, . . . . .	4 50	270

To explain more clearly how these tables have been made up we quote the statement respecting them of the Secretary of Internal Affairs for the State of Pennsylvania. He says :

"In the compilation of the tables of wages paid to wage-workers in Pennsylvania, we have deemed it proper to travel out of the beaten path. . . . Table I. shows the *highest* rates of wages paid per diem, multiplied by six full working days, to show the *highest* weekly wages, and this multiplied by fifty-two, to show the highest annual wages. Table II. gives the average daily wages, multiplied by the number of days *actually* employed per annum, and this product divided by fifty-two shows the actual weekly wages paid and received."

These tables show, by comparing them, how the general public are systematically deceived and deluded as regards the actual wages received by toilers in the iron-ore mines of Pennsylvania, and as regards their actual condition. Table II. tells the ghastly truth, and yet, not the whole truth. For even from the scanty wages exhibited in Table II. deductions are made for various reasons and pretexts not shown in the table. And while we are writing this, to-day's issue of a Philadelphia paper is before us, containing the statement that the present wages in the ore-mines of the most extensive iron-ore region in Pennsylvania are fifty cents per day, and sixty cents for experts.

Another of the leading industries of Pennsylvania, is that of mining coal. At different times, and according to the activity of the coal trade, it employs from 120,000 to 150,000 miners, laborers, and mechanics. The tables which we shall give below are taken from the official report on the industries of Pennsylvania for the year 1884. They have been prepared from the reports of operators who employed about 82,000 wage-workers in the anthracite coal-mines, and about 37,000 wage-workers in the bituminous coal-mines.

Respecting these tables the Secretary of Internal Affairs says :

"The great difference between theoretical wages and actual wages, is to be accounted for by the difference actually existing between theoretical working time and actual time employed. This difference amounts to one hundred and twenty-eight days in the anthracite, and one hundred and ten days in the bituminous coal-fields."

We first give the tables which exhibit respectively the theoretical and the actual wages in the anthracite coal regions :

TABLE I.—*Exhibit of Highest Average Wages in the Anthracite Coal Mines of Pennsylvania, Based on full Working Time.*

Theoretical Wages. Employees.	Day.	Week.	Year.
Miners on contract, . . . .	\$2 70	\$16 20	\$842 40
Miners on wages, . . . .	2 00	12 00	624 00
Laborers, inside, . . . .	1 78	10 68	555 36
Laborers, outside, . . . .	1 40	8 40	436 80
Boys, . . . .	65	3 90	202 80
Drivers and runners, . . . .	1 43	8 58	446 18
Firemen, . . . .	1 58	9 48	492 96
Engineers, . . . .	1 88	11 28	586 56
Blacksmiths, . . . .	1 91	11 46	595 92
Slate-pickers, boss, . . . .	1 55	9 30	483 60
Slate-pickers, boys, . . . .	50	3 00	156 00

Were this "theoretical" exhibit realized in actual fact by wage-workers in the anthracite coal-fields, there would be little reason



for complaint, and we are inclined to think that the wage-workers would not complain. But the table of actual wages, which we give below, shows that the foregoing table is simply a "word of promise to the ear, but broken to the hope."

Compare now with that table the one which follows :

TABLE II.—*Exhibit of Actual Wages at the Anthracite Coal Mines of Pennsylvania, Based on Actual Time Employed.*

Actual Wages. Employees.	Day.	Week.	Year.
Miners on contract, . . . . .	\$2 70	\$8 84	\$459 68
Miners on wages, . . . . .	2 00	7 00	364 00
Laborers, inside, . . . . .	1 78	6 14	319 28
Laborers, outside, . . . . .	1 40	4 91	255 32
Boys, . . . . .	65	2 07	107 64
Drivers and runners, . . . . .	1 43	5 32	276 64
Firemen, . . . . .	1 58	5 73	297 96
Engineers, . . . . .	1 88	8 84	459 68
Blacksmiths, . . . . .	1 91	7 16	372 32
Slate-pickers, boss, . . . . .	1 55	5 60	291 20
Slate-pickers, boys, . . . . .	50	1 70	88 40

By glancing from one to the other of these tables the vast difference between the "theoretical" and the actual condition, as regards wages, of the toilers at the anthracite coal-mines, will be seen.

To save the trouble of a laborious comparison we tabulate the differences, per week and per year :

TABLE III.—*Exhibit of Differences between Theoretical and Actual Wages, and Consequent Loss, per Week and per Year, at the Anthracite Mines of Pennsylvania.*

Employees.	Loss of Wages.	
	Per Week.	Per Year.
Miners on contract, . . . . .	\$7 36	\$382 72
Miners on wages, . . . . .	5 00	260 00
Laborers, inside, . . . . .	4 54	236 08
Laborers, outside, . . . . .	3 48	180 96
Boys, . . . . .	1 83	95 16
Drivers and runners, . . . . .	3 26	169 52
Firemen, . . . . .	3 75	195 00
Engineers, . . . . .	2 44	126 88
Blacksmiths, . . . . .	4 30	223 60
Slate-pickers, boss, . . . . .	3 70	192 40
Slate-pickers, boys, . . . . .	1 30	67 60

In the bituminous coal regions a like discrepancy exists between the nominal or theoretical and the actual wages, as the following tables prove. They show, too, that the condition of wage-workers in the bituminous coal-fields is even worse than that of wage-workers in the anthracite coal-fields :

TABLE I.—*Exhibit of Highest Average Wages Paid in the Bituminous Coal Mines of Pennsylvania, Based on Full Working Time.*

Theoretical Wages. Employees.	Day.	Week.	Year.
Miners, . . . . .	\$2 00	\$12 00	\$624 00
Laborers, inside, . . . . .	1 75	10 50	546 00
Laborers, outside, . . . . .	1 60	9 60	499 20
Mule drivers, . . . . .	1 75	10 50	546 00
Blacksmiths, . . . . .	2 00	12 00	624 00
Coke-oven chargers, . . . . .	1 70	10 20	530 40
Coke-oven drawers, . . . . .	1 65	9 90	514 80
Mine boss, . . . . .	2 80	16 80	873 00
Carpenters, . . . . .	1 75	10 50	546 00
Clerks, . . . . .	2 25	13 50	702 00
Boys, . . . . .	60	3 60	187 20

How wofully short of this "theoretical exhibit" are the actual wages of the workers in the bituminous coal-fields of Pennsylvania is shown by the table which immediately follows :

TABLE II.—*Exhibit of Actual Wages Paid in the Bituminous Coal Mines of Pennsylvania, Based on Actual Time Employed.*

Actual Wages. Employees.	Per Day.	Per Week.	Per Year.
Miners, . . . . .	\$2 00	\$7 10	\$369 20
Laborers, inside, . . . . .	1 75	6 30	327 60
Laborers, outside, . . . . .	1 60	5 61	291 72
Mule drivers, . . . . .	1 75	6 20	322 40
Blacksmiths, . . . . .	2 00	7 20	374 40
Coke-oven chargers, . . . . .	1 70	6 04	314 08
Coke-oven drawers, . . . . .	1 65	5 68	305 36
Mine boss, . . . . .	2 80	12 00	624 00
Carpenters, . . . . .	1 75	7 00	364 00
Clerks, . . . . .	2 25	10 00	520 00
Boys, . . . . .	60	2 70	140 40

After examining this latter table, the fact must be considered that these "actual" wages are subject to various drawbacks and deductions enforced against employees, and which their necessitous condition compels them to submit to. These drawbacks and deductions amount to from twenty to twenty-five per cent. of wages that the employees are credited with upon their employers' books. When this fact is taken into consideration, it becomes evident that it is scarcely possible for the wage-workers to obtain for themselves and their families mere subsistence, not to speak of a decent and comfortable livelihood. There seems to be no opportunity or chance, even, of them rising above the condition of mere serfs, compelled to toil hopelessly during life, on the terms and conditions which their employers prescribe.

To show more clearly the discrepancy between the "theoretical" wages of employees in the bituminous coal-fields, as furnished by

employers, and published from time to time in our newspapers, and the actual wages (excluding, too, even, drawbacks and deductions commonly made from them), we give below a table compiled by the Secretary of Internal Affairs, exhibiting the losses incurred per week by wage-workers, owing to irregular employment. To this table we have added a column, showing from the same official figures the losses per year :

*Exhibit of Differences Between Theoretical and Actual Wages Paid per Week [and per Year] in Bituminous Mines in Pennsylvania.*

Employees.	Wages. Loss per Week.	Wages. Loss per Year.
Miners, . . . . .	\$4 90	\$254 80
Laborers, inside, . . . . .	4 20	218 40
Laborers, outside, . . . . .	3 99	207 48
Mule drivers, . . . . .	3 30	223 60
Blacksmiths, . . . . .	4 80	249 60
Coke-oven chargers, . . . . .	4 16	216 32
Coke-oven drawers, . . . . .	4 22	219 44
Mine boss, . . . . .	4 80	249 60
Carpenters, . . . . .	3 50	182 00
Clerks, . . . . .	3 50	182 00
Boys, . . . . .	90	46 80

By comparing this table of "losses" per week and per year of wage-workers in the bituminous coal regions in Pennsylvania, owing to irregular employment, with the table of actual wages credited them, a clearer idea will be obtained of their real condition. The brief comment of the Secretary of Internal Affairs upon this point contains a ghastly truth, the deep significance of which is well worth pondering over; "It must be confessed," he says, "that the weekly wages of Pennsylvania coal operatives is not calculated to admit of a saving fund against the day of sickness or disaster. . . . Looking at the result, and it is one that has been obtained after full and impartial investigation, we are forced to the conclusion that more steady and certain employment throughout the year to employees in the coal fields of Pennsylvania would be more beneficial to the wage-workers than would a nominal rise in daily wages. Not that we think that the present daily wages are sufficient, but rather that the daily wages paid under the present system of broken time is calculated to deceive the wage-workers themselves, who, for the most part, forget the past danger of uncertainty in their employments, and, with a generous hope, multiply their certain daily wages by a certain full time which, alas! never comes."

The space allowed us is limited, and this fact prevents us from going into details of the wages and condition of wage-workers in

other industrial pursuits of Pennsylvania. But, as bearing on the subject, and as containing statistics which are well worthy of careful study, we give the following tabulated exhibit of the average weekly wages of all wage-workers in the principal industries in Pennsylvania, compiled by the Secretary of Internal Affairs. The explanatory title of the table is:

*An Exhibit of the Average Weekly Wages of all Wage-Workers in the Several Industries of Pennsylvania Named, Supposing the Annual Amounts of Wages Paid in each Industry were Divided Equally among all the Wage-Workers in the Special Industry from which the Annual Wage Fund is Obtained.*

Industries.	Weekly Wages.	Industries.	Weekly Wages.
Agricultural implements, . . . . .	\$ 8 00	Iron founderies, . . . . .	\$11 40
Axes and saws, . . . . .	8 80	Lasts, . . . . .	7 75
Bessemer steel, . . . . .	12 17	Milling, flour and grist, . . . . .	5 04
Blast furnaces, . . . . .	8 50	Malt, . . . . .	8 80
Bloomeries, . . . . .	8 12	Neckwear, . . . . .	7 25
Brass founderies, . . . . .	9 80	Ores, iron, . . . . .	4 80
Boilers and engines, . . . . .	8 56	Oilcloths, . . . . .	5 17
Bridges, . . . . .	9 00	Oil refineries, . . . . .	7 00
Boots and shoes, . . . . .	8 00	Paper, . . . . .	7 15
Breweries, . . . . .	12 00	Paints, . . . . .	9 33
Bricks, common, . . . . .	3 00	Planing mills, . . . . .	8 00
Bricks, fire, . . . . .	6 00	Potteries, . . . . .	7 66
Brushes, . . . . .	3 20	Rolling mills, . . . . .	8 00
Carpets, . . . . .	6 71	Sawmills, . . . . .	5 29
Cigars, . . . . .	7 08	Slate quarries, . . . . .	6 10
Cotton cloth, . . . . .	5 10	Sugar refineries, . . . . .	9 25
Crucible steel, . . . . .	11 00	Soap and candles, . . . . .	8 20
Crucibles, . . . . .	16 60	Show cases, . . . . .	9 50
Cordage, . . . . .	4 80	Silk, . . . . .	4 00
Coal, anthracite, . . . . .	6 91	Shirts, . . . . .	5 00
Coal, bituminous, . . . . .	7 20	Stoves and ranges, . . . . .	11 00
Distilleries, . . . . .	8 20	Tanneries, . . . . .	7 50
Furniture, . . . . .	8 75	Trunks, . . . . .	8 00
Glass, window, . . . . .	11 50	Toys, . . . . .	3 64
Glass, flint and green, . . . . .	8 00	Terra cotta, . . . . .	9 80
Glass, sand, . . . . .	5 80	Type founderies, . . . . .	5 43
General machinery, . . . . .	9 25	Umbrellas and parasols, . . . . .	6 04
Hats and caps, . . . . .	4 00	Upholstery goods, . . . . .	6 16
Harness, . . . . .	8 00	Woollen goods, . . . . .	5 40

With regard to this table the Secretary of Internal Affairs of Pennsylvania says:

“The general average of the above would be (if we take into consideration the proportion of employees to the industries named in the table) about seven dollars and a half per week. This sum will not permit of any extravagant habits, and any diminution of it must inevitably compel the average wage-worker to abstain from the purchase of those necessaries of life which, at the time, seem

most convenient to dispense with. To lessen the wages of a body of wage-workers is, in effect, to cause an 'over-production,' so called, of manufactured products, since the average wage-worker, in order to meet the requirements of nature and those wants incident to his station in life, must, in the event of a reduction of wages, either go in debt and satisfy those wants, or economize, and, consequently, leave the manufactured or other product in the hands of the dealer; hence an over-production, which is but the result of an enforced under-consumption."

A few more brief comments on the volume before us, and we reluctantly dismiss it. The Secretary of Internal Affairs of Pennsylvania has, with much pains and labor, compiled various tables comparing the differences in condition as regards wages, cost of food, house rent, etc., of wage-workers in Pennsylvania and in European countries. After an exhaustive comparison of the facts and tables of cost of food which he gives, the conclusion is that the English, and Scotch, and Irish wage-worker lives at less expense for food, and food which better maintains his physical strength, than does the wage-worker in the United States.

It may be our climate; it may be wrongly-cultivated tastes and desires; but whatever be the cause, it seems to be *necessary* for the wage-worker in the United States, in order to keep up the muscle and energy required for his work, to consume more expensive food than in England, Scotland, Ireland, or any other trans-Atlantic country.

So, too, as regards house-rent, fuel, clothing, and medical attendance. As regards fuel, the wage-workers in England and Scotland usually get it at a nominal sum, merely covering the actual cost of delivery. In the United States the full market price, or more than that, is charged. The average house-rent charged for tenements in our coal regions is five dollars per month, a rent-charge which is equal to from twenty to forty per cent. annually upon the actual cost. And that the discomfort to which wage-workers are subject as regards their dwellings is not owing to their wilful neglect, the Secretary of Internal Affairs testifies as follows: "The majority of wage-workers in Pennsylvania live in houses . . . that, in most cases, are clean, and bearing evidence of good management by tidy housewives."

Another element of the wage-question is commented upon in the volume before us. It is that of "Company Stores and Store Orders." We condense the remarks on this subject. "Operators, in many instances, report the amount of wages paid wage-workers as actual money paid them, when the facts would warrant them in reporting fully two-thirds of the amount as *groceries* and *provisions* paid in lieu of money. . . . The system of 'company stores'

robs the wage-workers of an amount of money it is impossible to calculate, but enough is known to warrant the inference that he who, forced by circumstances, is obliged to accept store orders or deal at the 'company store' is at the mercy of his employer."

And just this system of accepting orders on the "company's store" in lieu of wages, is generally enforced by employers on their employees throughout both the anthracite and the bituminous coal regions. It is forbidden by legislative enactments, but those enactments are defied or evaded. One of the methods for doing this, and one which operates most disadvantageously to wage-workers, even where the "company store" system does not exist, is the practice of withholding wages for the period of a month before payment. That wages could be paid at shorter intervals, without detriment to employers, is proved by the fact that in England they are usually paid "once a week," or "once a fortnight." With regard to this, the Secretary of Internal Affairs makes the following significant remark:

"The rule in Pennsylvania is to withhold the bulk of the wages for a period of one month before paying, and, in some cases, a certain percentage of wages is withheld as a guarantee fund against the violation, on the part of the miners, of certain iron-clad contracts, so-called, framed to evade laws passed for the better protection of miners."

"In this same connection, and as having a direct relation to our subject, we quote the following statement of the Secretary of Internal Affairs:

". . . . From the reports made of difficulties, antagonisms, and strikes, it would appear that little real harmony exists between the employer and the employed. Capital [*Capitalists* would be more accurate] too often regards the laborer with little or any more consideration than a beast of burden, while the laborer, too often with justice, esteems the employer, if not an absolute oppressor, yet as often wanting in human feeling toward him. That such a state of things should exist is unfortunate, but a careful examination of the question renders such conclusion imperative."

In further evidence of who are chiefly to blame for the existing antagonisms between wage-payers and wage-workers, according to the opinion of the Secretary of Internal Affairs, we quote the following statements:

"From statistics and reports received, the following conclusions have been reached:

"That the wage-worker, as a rule, is frugal, temperate, and industrious. The amount of wages paid does not admit of intemperate or improvident habits.

"That the present amount of wages annually paid does not give

to the wage-worker comfortable means of support and enable him to lay by even a moderate fund to meet the necessary exigencies he is almost certain to encounter.

"That wage-workers receive in wages *one-third less* than is generally accredited to them, owing to the fact that the accredited wages per diem are not the average for computation throughout the year, without due allowance is made for unemployed time. *Enforced* idleness is more disastrous than the low rate of wages.

"That . . . . steady and certain employment is more important to the wage-worker than a nominal advance in per diem wages."

"An evil growing out of present conditions is shown by the increase of child-labor, and this *cannot be prevented* until the head of the family is enabled by his own labor to earn an *adequate support*.

"The great mass of the community is composed of wage-workers. It is essential to the present and future welfare of the State that labor should be justly and adequately paid.

"It is the true interest of the employer as well as of the employee, and it should be the aim of the employer, not only to pay just wages to the extent of his ability, but also to protect the employees from casualties to life and limbs, so often occurring by reason of the neglect of proper safeguards."

These are the conclusions not of a wage-worker in the technical sense of the word, but rather of an employer, after a careful survey of the whole field of industrial labor in Pennsylvania and possessed of the best possible means of accurate information. In view of the facts and statistics we have presented (and they are but a small part of what we might exhibit), it seems evident to our mind that the reason why the wage question is a source of constant strife and contention, instead of amicable adjustment, lies chiefly at the door of employers rather than of employees. This remark, too, holds good with respect to the United States generally. For while we have confined our statistical statements to Pennsylvania, yet if the view be extended to our country as a whole, it will be found that wage-workers in Pennsylvania are, to say the least, in no worse condition than in other States.

Between capital and labor, strictly speaking, there is not and cannot be antagonism. Both enter into and are conjoined inseparably in every form of human industry. The one is the product of the other, and neither can prosper separately. But this is aside from the real practical question. While *capital* and *labor* are not antagonistic, it is a fact of every-day experience that *capitalists* and *laborers* are constantly in antagonism.

It is unfortunate, and not only unfortunate but wrong, that this

should be the case. For owing to it both classes suffer, and society at large, which is almost entirely composed of them, also suffers.

The real practical question, therefore, is, at whose door lies the wrong? And if both are in the wrong, to what extent and in what way?

The discussion of these questions would open up another and a very interesting branch of the general subject, which limitation of space forbids us entering upon.

There are however some important facts bearing on the subject which, though little thought of, are so well known, that we need adduce no proof of them, but simply state them.

The duties of wage-workers in their relation to wage-payers, to themselves, and to society are preached *ad nauseam* from press and pulpit. They are told that they should be temperate, patient, contented, respectful, honest, and just, and that they should consider and strive to promote the interests of those from whom they receive wages. If they violate those duties they are summarily denounced, their shortcomings, their unreasonable demands, their inconsiderate disregard of their employer's position or necessities with reference to his business, their rash acts of violence to persons or property, are swiftly exposed and unsparingly denounced.

But there is singular reticence with regard to equally censurable violations of duty when committed by employers. That side of the case is seldom depicted, and when it is it is done usually in colors so faint and indistinct that it attracts little attention. The public press seldom alludes to it, nor does the pulpit, and when they do the reference is so general that its point and special application are unfelt.

A glaring example of this is furnished by the manner in which the public press practically ignores notorious frauds upon wage workers which are constantly practiced by coal operators and other capitalists, and by incorporated companies, with regard to weights and measures employed in determining the amount of work done by employees. Scales are so manipulated, and mine cars of falsely reported capacity are employed to reduce by ten, twenty, or thirty per cent. the amounts of wages which the employees have fairly earned, and which should be placed to their credit. If butchers or farmers are caught selling fifteen ounces of beef or butter for a pound, or retailers of dry-goods in measuring off calico at the rate of thirty inches for a yard, they quickly suffer the penalties of the law, and are regarded by the public as common cheats and scoundrels. But year by year frauds of far greater extent are practiced, notoriously, in our coal regions by coal operators and mining companies without detriment to the social standing of the



operators, nor of the presidents and directors of those companies, and without their being made amenable in any way to law.

The complaints of the miners against this practice were so earnest that some years ago a law was enacted in Pennsylvania prohibiting it, and providing that the capacity of the mine cars should be ascertained and registered by a specially authorized officer, and that at each mine a "check-boss" or weighmaster might be appointed by the miners. But the penalties for disobeying the law are sadly defective. The law is notoriously disregarded. Yet we have never heard of a single instance in which the operators or owners of coal mines, or the presidents or directors of coal companies, or their superintendents, have been fined or imprisoned, or in any way punished for violating this law. Only a few days ago the operatives in the Clearfield and Broad Top coal region published a list of complaints, one of which was that the scales at the mines were so arranged that they showed less than the true weight of coal in each mine car. They declared that their check-boss or weight-inspector was not allowed to touch the scales, and that all he could do was to notice the apparent weight of the cars as they rapidly passed over the falsely-adjusted scales. At other mines there are no check-bosses, and at still others there are other means employed for cheating the miners, whether the quantity of coal mined and their resulting wages be determined by weight or by measure.

These facts are widely known. There is not a newspaper in Pennsylvania that is ignorant of them, yet how seldom are they alluded to, and when alluded to, in how pointless and deprecatory manner is not the allusion made? Yet the systematic, deliberative cheating of coal operatives that is thus perpetrated amounts yearly to at least a million dollars and probably to double that sum.

Then, again, the system of keeping back wages of employees for the period of at least a month, and of frequently, too, reserving wages to a certain amount, or for a certain period, as a forfeit against employees violating "iron-clad" contracts, operates—whether in all cases intended so to do or not—to cut down wages to an extent of from ten to twenty-five per cent., according to circumstances and localities.

On this subject the recent testimony of Mr. Andrew Carnegie, an employer of thousands of workmen, in a recent open letter published in many of our daily newspapers, is directly in point. He said that in an interview with a large body of his employees they declared that a reduction of the period of paying wages from four weeks to two weeks would be equivalent to an increase of more than five per cent. on their wages. It is needless to say that a reduction to one week would more than duplicate that percentage

of advantage to wage-workers. What gives all the more force to this testimony is that these employees are not compelled to purchase at "company stores," and are in a region where there is free competition among those from whom they procure their supplies.

The "company store" custom is a natural adjunct of this system of holding back wages. At the start of new mining operations in a secluded region there was a seeming justification for it. It was necessary that a store, or depot of supplies for the miners, convenient to the place where they worked, should be established. The individuals, or the company, operating the mines, it was argued, might as well establish the store and reap the profit from it as any one else. And the argument would be a sound one were it not for the temptations to abuse power and to exercise extortion, which experience shows the system involves. How great that abuse is, and the consequent extortion, is abundantly proved by the testimony which induced (*compelled* would, perhaps, more correctly express the truth) the Legislature of Pennsylvania to enact a prohibitory law against "company stores," as well as by the emphatic condemnation of them by the Secretary of Internal Affairs. But partly owing to defects in the law itself, and partly owing to its ineffective administration, growing out of the unwillingness of the officials whose duty it is to report and bring to justice the influential parties who disregard its provisions, it is evaded and defied to an extent that makes it virtually inoperative and dead.

Where stores are not publicly and avowedly established and maintained by "companies," or individual operators, they are virtually so, and have the same oppressive effect through operators being interested in them and receiving a percentage of the sales made to their employees. It is well understood, too, by the latter that unless they purchase their supplies at those stores they will be dismissed from employment, or, on one or another pretext, will have the most unremunerative work crowded over upon them.

Moreover, owing to the long periods that the scanty wages paid the operatives are kept back, the operatives must buy their supplies on credit. As they have no visible property which they can pledge as security, and as their wages are both scanty and precarious, the merchant, even if he have no understanding or connection with the operators, and even if he is a competitor of the company's store, puts a much higher price upon everything he sells to these miners, in order to cover the risk of losses which he incurs.

Thus wage-workers are crushed and ground beneath the upper and the lower millstone. On the one hand, they have to struggle against the tendency of employers to reduce their wages, and pay them just as little as will secure their services. On the other hand,

they have to pay higher prices for all their purchases than others who buy for cash in the open market.

These facts are perfectly well known to the writers for our newspapers and periodicals, yet few and faint are the censures pronounced upon the capitalists and companies who, for their own profit or convenience, impose these disadvantages and inflict these losses upon their employees. There are legislative enactments professedly framed to protect wage-workers from some of these abuses and methods of extortion, but they are lame and ineffective, and the controlling influence exerted by capitalists and corporations over those whose duty it is to enforce these legislative enactments practically nullifies even the little prohibitory force they have.

Under these circumstances it is not at all surprising that widespread dissatisfaction and discontent prevail among wage-workers. They feel that they are imposed on, cheated, and defrauded. They know that when trade becomes brisk and business profitable, they receive a tardy and scanty increase of wages, but when the profits of their employers are lessened, their wages are swiftly reduced.

As for the lawlessness and acts of violence of wage-workers, there are several things to be said in explanation—in explanation, but not in excuse or defence. For we can frame no apology for lawlessness.

The first of these remarks is that these acts are most frequently committed not by the wage-workers themselves, but by the "roughs and toughs and hoodlums" who, on every occasion of excitement or disturbance, are ready to take advantage of it and make it an opportunity for indulging their criminal propensities.

The second point we make is that it is not surprising if the wage-workers themselves are sometimes carried away by excitement and indignation into disregard of the requirements of the law. In the action of their employers whose exactions they are resisting and striking against, they have an example of successful evasion and defiance of law. They see that they disregard and defy numerous emphatic prohibitions of State Constitutions; that they openly evade and defy legislative enactments; that they resort to legal action when it is to their interest to do it, and that, at other times, they resist its action by employing the potent influences of wealth to bribe legislators, to control State and municipal officers, and to lame and paralyze the arm of the law when raised against corporations and capitalists in our courts of justice.

If, therefore, there is danger of wage-workers accepting the satanic gospel of disregard for law, it is because wealthy capitalists and corporations are teaching them that bad lesson, not by precept, but in the more effective and potent form of example.

The occurrences of the last few weeks or months furnish abun-

dant proof of this. Take, for example, the street passenger railways of Philadelphia. They were created for public convenience and benefit. For that reason, and that reason alone, special and extraordinary privileges were granted to them. They were permitted to occupy public streets, to the obstruction and disadvantage of other modes of travel and methods of transit and transportation. Certain specific conditions and restrictions were enacted which they were expected in good faith to perform and observe. Yet, it is a notorious fact that each and all of these corporations disregard and violate those conditions and limitations. They have taken possession of the public highways of the city, and they use them as though they were their own property, and in open disregard of the rights of all property owners along them. They were expected to supply and run a sufficient number of cars to comfortably transport the citizens who desired to use them. Instead of this, they run only such a number as will enable them to transport their passengers by crowding them together in solid masses in the passage way and on the platforms with the utmost discomfort, and often to the serious injury of health. Then, too, the conditions of their charters respecting the repairing of the streets through which their rails are laid, and respecting other matters, are notoriously violated as regards the intention and purpose of those conditions.

These plain evasions or defiant violations of law are systematically practised by the presidents and directors of these corporations; and are tacitly approved of by the stockholders—men who are leaders of society, influential citizens, and in many cases are members of Congress, of our State Legislature, of our Municipal Councils and occupants of other offices of high responsibility.

The second and last special instance we shall cite is that of the strike upon the Gould system of railroads in our Southwestern States. The particular grievances which caused this strike have not been specifically nor clearly placed before the public. Its immediate occasion was the discharge of one of the foremen of one of the repair shops of the Texas Pacific Railroad, which act was regarded by the Knights of Labor of that region as a blow struck at their whole society. But this was only the occasion of the strike. The underlying cause is alleged by the strikers to consist of arbitrary abuse of power on the part of the railroad officials and of unreasonable and oppressive conditions imposed by them upon the employees. The employees from the outset of the strike profess to be entirely willing to submit their alleged grievances to investigation and arbitration, but the railroad authorities stubbornly refuse to accede to this proposal.

The strike quickly extended to the Missouri Pacific Railroad and its branches (which connect with the Texas Pacific and furnish to it a large part of its traffic). The Governors of the four States

of Missouri, Kansas, Arkansas and Texas (the business of which States was most seriously and injuriously affected) intervened and proposed arbitration. But the proposal was unheeded by the officials of the railroads mentioned.

Then the "switchmen" of the East St. Louis railroad yards (which are the meeting point of all the railroads coming to St. Louis from the entire region of the United States east of the Mississippi River) also struck. The effect of this was to cut off St. Louis from its traffic with the East as well as with the Southwest. Yet still the railroad officials refused to listen to any terms of adjustment of the contention, save that of absolute and unconditional submission on the part of their employees.

The question has resolved itself into a question of power, viz., whether Jay Gould and his associates shall prescribe unconditionally, and without regard to the requirements of law or of justice, the terms on which their employees shall work, or whether the latter by their associated, united, strength shall be able to compel him to submit the questions at issue to fair and impartial arbitration.

We have excluded from this statement reference to the few instances of violence to property and persons which have occurred up to the time of our putting these thoughts on paper. The instances have been few, and it is alleged that the perpetrators of them were not strikers, but members of a disorderly mob of professed sympathizers, consisting of persons who are always ready to take advantage of occasions of public excitement to commit criminal acts.

In this respect the strike, up to the time of our writing these lines, is in marked contrast with the great railroad strike which some years ago extended over the States of New York, Pennsylvania, Maryland and Virginia. Then bridges, railroad cars and depots, and warehouses were burned, the civil and military power was set at defiance, and countless acts of violence to property and persons were perpetrated. But in this strike, up to the time of our writing, but one solitary instance of violent resistance of the civil power has been committed, resulting in the murder of several persons at Fort Worth, Texas. And in this instance, it is asserted by the strikers that the guilty persons were not strikers or Knights of Labor, but were men who were entirely independent of them and who acted upon their own personal lawless impulses.

Whether this be the truth, or not, it is certain that the leading officers of the Knights of Labor have earnestly and persistently counselled the members of the society to abstain from lawlessness and acts of violence. They have exhorted them to maintain patience under all circumstances and to employ only passive resistance to the obstinacy of their employers.

On the other hand, there are two points which stand forth prominently respecting this whole affair.

In the first place, the "deputy-sheriffs," or "guards," whom the railroad officials hired, were largely composed of roughs, skilled in the use of guns and revolvers, and accustomed to employ them on slightest provocation.<sup>1</sup> The result of this has been the reckless killing of six men and one woman for no other cause than that they were in a crowd of spectators who hooted and jeered at the "deputy sheriffs." The "railroad guards," or "deputy sheriffs," immediately fled across the Mississippi bridge. That the strikers and the excited populace of East St. Louis did not wreak vengeance, for this utterly unjustifiable slaughter, upon the railroad property and persons in its employ, was chiefly owing to the heroic exertions and impassioned appeals, patience, and respect for law, made by Mr. Hayes and Major Brown, members of the Executive Committee of the Knights of Labor. On the following night, a considerable amount of railroad property was destroyed by incendiary fires, but all the known facts lead to the conclusion that these fires were not kindled by the strikers, but by desperadoes who took advantage of the confusion and excitement to gratify their criminal propensities.

Our second remark is that there is good reason to believe that whatever decision is eventually reached as regards the questions at issue between the strikers and the railroad companies, Jay Gould and his associates are making money out of the strike. Whether the assertion be true or not, that they secretly promoted the strike, it is certain that, by the course they have pursued, they are prolonging it; and, by their manipulations of the stock market, while they keep, meanwhile, their own intentions and plans secret as regards the final settlement of the contention, it is easy to see that their gains through stock speculations will probably amount to far more than the losses they sustain through interruption of traffic over their railroads.

We conclude with the remark that it is futile for the public press to be constantly preaching platitudes respecting patience and regard for the rights of employers and respect for law, whilst the

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<sup>1</sup> This has been denied by the railroad officials, but the following advertisement, extensively published, speaks for itself:

"LOUISVILLE AND NASHVILLE RAILROAD COMPANY.—OFFICE OF AGENT, April 6, 1886.—Ten good men from here are wanted as deputy marshals at East St. Louis, to protect Louisville and Nashville employees. Five dollars per day and board will be paid. Also, a number of platform-men can be given employment. Only men who have plenty of grit and mean business need apply. Apply at once.

"T. S. GENUNG, Agent."

The advertisement was quickly answered by men who had "plenty of grit" and "meant business;" and how they showed their "grit" and the horrible "business" they did, the sad sequel proves.

evasions and defiant violations, constantly practiced by mammoth capitalists and corporations, are ignored, condoned and tacitly approved.

We have said that wage-workers are not, as a class, lawless, nor infected with Socialistic and Communistic ideas, but how long this will continue to be the fact remains to be seen. Unless our mammoth capitalists and corporations learn and practice justice, fairness and consideration for their employees; unless they abstain from the illegal, unjust and extortionate measures of which they are notoriously guilty; unless they themselves respect and obey the law, we risk nothing in predicting that, before another generation comes upon the stage of active life, there will be, here in the United States, a social revolution that will involve indescribable confusion and destruction of property and of life.



## THE DECREES OF THE THIRD PLENARY COUNCIL.

*Acta et Decreta Concilii Plenarii Baltimorensis Tertii, A.D. MDCCCLXXXIV.* Praeside Illmo. ac Revmo. Jacobo Gibbons, Archiepiscopo Baltimorensi et Delegato Apostolico. Baltimoræ: Typis Joannis Murphy et Sociorum. MDCCCLXXXVI. 8vo. Pp. cix., 321.

**H**ERE we have printed in large, readable type, on good paper, and with typographical accuracy, the Decrees of the late Plenary Council of Baltimore. The one hundred and five first pages are a preliminary to the Decrees themselves, comprising, as they do, the letters that passed between the Holy See, the Apostolic Delegate, and the Fathers of the Council, an account of each solemn session (five in all) and its ceremonial, and finally some extracts from the minutes of the private sessions. In the edition of the Second Plenary Council of 1867, the minutes of the private sessions were given almost entire. But, in the case of the Third Plenary, this would have been impossible. The duration of the Council, prolonged, as it was, from November 9th to December 7th, the great number of those sessions (generally twice a day), and the number of topics brought under debate, swelled the