A Trades Union Collapse.

If there was any spot on the globe where labor unions had things all their own way that spot was Australia. Workingmen of all grades were so banded together that it was thought they could effect a revolution of government and society if they so willed. They had the eight hour labor day, and laborers received their own prices. In the sheep raising and agricultural districts not enough workingmen could be obtained to fill the demand. In brief, here if anywhere labor had opportunity to measure itself with capital and come off best.

The utter collapse of the great labor strike of last fall, however, proves that when labor, even as capital itself, becomes unjust or tyrannous in the public judgment, then trades unions themselves must fail. Mr. H. H. Champion, writing in the Nineteenth Century of the failure of the Australian strike, says it fell through because those who engaged in it were an army of lions led by asses.

The trades unions were down so fine that there was even a sheep shearers' organization. When sheep owners ventured to employ shearers who did not belong to this organization the federated unions determined to boycott non-union wool. Men of the maritime unions were ordered not to convey away any wool that had not the union stamp upon the bales. Next the members of a ship officers' organization wanted higher pay, and the seamen and dock laborers were therefore ordered not to work any more till the demand was granted. The network extended throughout Australia, and the maritime trade of all the ports was stopped. If ships could not be loaded or unloaded, of course the coal supply of cities that received their fuel by water was cut off. Gas stokers refused to handle non-union coal, and at length Melbourne itself was left almost unlighted for two nights.

Then capital rose in indignation and took things into its own hands. Employers banded themselves together with oaths as strong as those in vogue among the workingmen's unions. The cup of wrath was full when the unions attempted to destroy the wool crop of 1890 by refusing to let it be sheared. The wool crop was worth $100,000,000. The capitalists organized with a defense fund of $2,000,000. They had besides a steady income annually of $400,000. The trades unions all together had no such money as this. Well, men must live, so must women and children. In this case the longest purse was thoroughly convinced that it had right on its side, and made a more spirited fight for that reason. The end was that the strike of all the trades unions in Australia collapsed utterly, and the long purse won.

Electricity's Limitations.

It is a time worn story that just about the time steam was adapted to the propulsion of ocean ships the eminent physicist, Dr. Lardner, wrote an elaborate and learned treatise to prove that steam could never by any possibility drive a vessel across the ocean. Perhaps that will be the fate of a scientific writer of our own time who has published lately his reasons why electricity can never be used as the motive power for long distance railroads.

It will be well adapted to street railways, because here it will be cheaper than horse power. The power stations and dynamos necessary to utilize it can be near enough together to make it an easy matter to keep the electrical cars running. But when it comes to long distance lines the case is wholly different. At intervals of every few miles it will be necessary to erect costly power stations and dynamos. These must be of such a character as to develop many hundred times the power required to operate street railways. They would therefore be vastly more expensive than the steam locomotive engines at present in use. The railroad companies of the present day are not flinging millions abroad in dividends, as is well known, and the matter of the added expense would offer an insuperable objection.

There is another equally great. It is well known that electric currents are "kittle cattle to drive." No method has as yet been invented to make even an electric light burn steadily five consecutive minutes at a time. If the electric mode of propulsion were adopted there would be frequent "stoppages of the entire traffic for periods varying from five minutes to several hours." In case of long distance railway trains the public would not put up with this one day. The objection, however, only shows that electrical transmission of power has not yet been perfected.

Finally the writer in question reminds his readers of a universal mistake in the popular mind in regard to electricity. It is not, as is supposed, a source of unlimited power in and of itself. It is merely a manifestation of energy, a convenient way of applying power previously produced. The radiant energy of the sun stored up in coal is transformed into power through the steam engine. That power is merely transmitted along the electric wire to the point where it is utilized.

What was the greatest single act of benevolence ever performed? Probably the signing of a document in Paris by Baron Hirsch, in which without any fuss at all he conveyed to trustees $2,400,000 for the relief of the persecuted Jews in Russia. All he said about it was: "I prefer arranging this matter in my lifetime to letting it wait till after my death."

Will there be farmers enough in the United States senate next year to make that body on the whole any better looking than it is now?

William E. Smythe congratulated the Nebraska irrigating convention on the fact that western Nebraska had ceased to pray for rain and gone to digging ditches.

A Chicago critic objects to the dramatic art of a certain actress because she "has no message to the soul." Dear, dear! And Chicago butchers forty hogs a minute!

The attention of educators and of those who make school laws is called to a new statute in Michigan. This hygienic law prohibits children suffering with chronic catarrh or consumption from attending the public schools. In the interest of public health this law, recognizing the scientific germ theory of disease and contagion, is to be commended.

Somebody has solemnly suggested that the perfect newspaper ought to be endowed, in order that it might have money enough to get as editors "men who will make ideally pure, wholesome and able newspapers." Great Scott! Would you add the newspapers to the awfully heavily, stupid old endowed institutions of the country? If so, then you ought at the same time to pay the public for reading them, for it won't read them any other way. A newspaper that cannot earn its own living and pay dividends besides ought to die, and that quickly. Besides, let us whisper this in your ear. Oh, solemn and heavy old theorist! The newspaper of the day reflects exactly the public that makes it, and is at all times just as "ideally pure" as it dares to be. Every newspaper editor prefers to be honest and tell the truth and puncture shams and cant, so far as the community will allow it.

The Agricultural Department.

The lecturer of the national grange comes to the defense of the United States department of agriculture in gallant style. He reminds cavilers of the benefits this department has conferred on American farmers and stock raisers, and enumerates some of them as follows:

First—It has stamped out pleuro-pneumonia among our cattle, and by wise legislation it asked of congress is compelling foreign nations to admit that our beef is healthy, and, therefore, forces them to remove their "restrictions" and opens up our markets abroad. The same system of inspection is doing and will continue to do the same for our pork and hog products.

Second—It imported the little parasite that has destroyed the cottony scale insect that was killing the orange and lemon trees of California, and that was destroying millions of dollars of capital invested in groves, and has stimulated new planting of hundreds of thousands of trees, and millions of dollars will be the annual reward to farmers on this count.

Third—Its investigations, covering several years and the most patient and persistent labor, into the "peach yellows," that is threatening another great industry in several states, where millions of dollars are again at stake, already give promise of success.

Fourth—Through the department of agriculture came the instructions and formulas of spraying out fruit trees and vines to save them from insects, blights, mildew, scabs, rot, etc. It was worth millions of dollars to the grape crop this year, and has raised the hopes of thousands of despondent grape growers, and the careful orchardist can now gather his apples and pears, beautiful in form and color, and no longer marred by rust and insects.

Educating Americans.

Foreign scientific men note particularly the want of thoroughness in American education. The truth is we have had so much to do in America and so short a period in which to do it that we have not had time for thorough preparation in either scientific or mechanical work. The foreigner says that while we are wonderfully talented naturally we fail when we go to undertake things requiring mechanical or scientific skill from want of preparation, partly in book knowledge, partly in manual training. The charge cannot be put aside either as wholly coming from foreign jealousy.

In England what is called the extension of university education has been devised to meet the wants of persons who cannot attend school, but who have some leisure to study at home. In America the Chautauqua system of instruction meets the same need to a certain extent. But the Chautauqua system does make specialists.

The question is, Why cannot our universities and colleges prepare a system by which earnest students may study at home under the direction of professors in each branch and get a good education in special branches? Nobody ought to work with his hands till he is so tired that he can do nothing but sink into slumber like an ox. The Almighty never meant it. The farm boy, the factory worker, the mechanic's apprentice ought to carry along with his manual work at least one branch of literary or scientific study. He should think carefully over what he would best like to do in the world, and then select a course of study that will lead up to it.

It was thus that Dr. Schliemann learned languages and ancient history: thus he prepared to be the great explorer and archæologist. While an errand boy in a wholesale store he prepared for future greatness and wealth. Our universities and higher schools do not begin to do the good they ought. They are not in touch at all with the whole people. They ought to extend their work far beyond their own walls, ought to do their part toward supplying the defective education which persons forced out to wrestle with material things at an early age were obliged to put up with. On the other hand, it should be borne in mind by all men and women that anybody, at any age, can learn anything he sets his heart on.

Of the Best German Make.

From Fliegende Blatter.

Stranger, entering a loan office, in which he notices he is the only customer.

"The people here must be pretty well to do. Nobody making use of the establishment."

"Just the contrary," answered the attendant; "they've nothing left they can pawn."

—

Student. "Goodness gracious, what lucky men these millionaires are! Just think of the money they can borrow."

—

"You call that a hard winter? Why, I remember when it was so cold the polar bear in the zoo broke out of his cage, tore his way into the snake house, and when caught was found there with one of the biggest boas 'round his neck!"

—

"If I wasn't a girl," said she, "I think I'd like to be a lieutenant of huzzars."

"Why, that's unnecessary, fraulein," replied the young soldier gallantly; "you're sufficiently irresistible as it is."

—

"Karl," protested his father, "you'll have to stop this spending business. You act as though you were the son of a millionaire."

"And are you," returned that young man, "going to hold me responsible that I am not?"

—

The family is just about sitting down to the midday meal, and some of little Frank's especially favorite dishes are already on the board. At that moment a letter is brought announcing the death of an aunt.

"Papa," suggested the lad, apprehensively, "instead of crying over it now, don't you think we'd better eat dinner first?"

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