

DESERET NEWS:

WEEKLY.

TRUTH AND LIBERTY.

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THE WAGES QUESTION.

THE advent of winter is to many thousands of the laboring population in various countries the coming of privation and suffering. As the season advances poverty's grip pinches, and with frost and snow empty cupboards and empty stomachs join to make wretchedness and misery complete. There are many noble efforts inaugurated by Christian societies and individual benevolence, to lessen the sum of human suffering and take the sharpness off the edge of poverty. But the objects of charity are so numerous in the large cities of the world that, in spite of the alms of the generous and the schemes of philanthropists, thousands upon thousands are left to pine in the misery that comes from lack of food and clothing and fuel, when the sun's rays fall feebly on the frozen earth.

There is something radically wrong in the organization of society, when so many suffer hunger and cold while the country teems with abundance and there is plenty for all with a big surplus to spare. While the rich grow richer the poor get poorer. This is the result in all civilized nations and most communities when they arrive at any considerable age.

No scheme of human planning has hitherto availed much to alter this condition of things, and, as the world is not ready to listen to any Divine suggestions, there is small prospect at present for any great change in the general social condition. Suffice it to say that God has placed within the reach of earth's children the elements of sustenance and comfort for all, and it is not according to his economy that the few should revel in luxury while the many suffer for the common necessities.

We noticed recently, with pleasure, a resolution passed by the House of Delegates at St. Louis, asking heads of departments of the city governments to raise the wages of laboring men. The *Journal* of that city commenting on this says, "We cannot have prosperity until good wages are paid to laboring people." We agree with the sentiment. While we do not approve of greed on the part of workmen, nor endorse the policy of exorbitant wages, we do consider fair living wages for the benefit of the community generally. Extremely low wages tend to make class distinctions, to keep people in ignorance as well as poverty, and to shut out from all but the employers most of the means of refinement, culture, and that progress which all political economists profess to desire for the whole race.

It is argued by some that men of means cannot afford to build and make improvements such as they desire unless wages are very low, and that consequently high wages are the cause of non-employment. But are none but the wealthy to have an opportunity of improving their homes and surroundings? If wages are liberal the workingman can afford to employ other workmen in branches of labor for which he is not adapted. The laborer can build and improve his home in his small way as well as the employer in his large way, and the means expended in liberal pay to workmen is more likely to be generally diffused than if saved and hoarded up by the capitalist, and thus its benefits will be more widely extended, and tend to general prosperity.

Complaint is frequently made about the high wages some mechanics and other skilled workmen demand, and they are reminded, by those who desire their services, of the low prices paid in early days in this country. But it should be remembered that the times and customs have changed materially. People generally, unless in extreme poverty, live better, dress better and have better surroundings than in the early times, and why should not the skillful workingman share in the luxuries that have come with the growth of the nation, as well as the capitalist, who has simply

made a profit by handling and distributing, or speculating, on the results of labor? Why should the employed be rated for extravagance while the employer maintains high style? If society demands a certain appearance from all who make any pretensions to respectability, why should the common, working people be blamed for striving to meet that demand as nearly as possible, honestly, and with the result of their own toil, and for wishing to earn as high a figure as they can get out of capital?

As to what is a high price for labor, that is something out of our power to determine, but it appears to us it should be regulated by its real value to the employer, instead of altogether by what it can be squeezed down to in consequence of a plethora of labor. But sentiment enters very little into such questions as these, the employer striving to obtain hands as cheap as possible, and the employed trying to get all they can. It is the old, old, conflict, capital against labor, and *vice versa*, that will always go on until co-operation establishes unity of interest between both elements.

But "a fair day's wages for a fair day's work" should be granted the world over, and a fair day's work for a fair day's wages should be equally universal. One of the sins of the latter days, for which the Lord is to bring men to judgment, is "oppressing the hireling in his wages," and another is the evil of the laborer "whose eyes are filled with greediness." It is the height of folly for working people to remain idle because they cannot obtain the full price they set upon their labor and ability, and it is wrong for the man of means to try to grind his fellow man, whom he finds at a disadvantage, down to the lowest notch for his services. We would like to see all workers fairly compensated for their industry, and believe that good wages is more likely to be productive of general prosperity, advancement and happiness, than the stingy policy of excessively cheap labor.

THE DEATH PENALTY.

"Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed." This was the command of the Almighty to the children of men, given when the family preserved from the world's destruction by water came forth from their retreat in the ark to commence anew the population of the earth. That command, so far as we are aware, has never been repealed. The criminal law of civilized nations, so far as it relates to culpable homicide, has been based upon this divine decree. The death penalty for wilful murder, with malice prepense and aforethought, has prevailed for many generations, and been considered the only just punishment for this capital offence. Of late years, however, there have been many attempts to abolish the death penalty, and substitute in its place imprisonment for life or for a long term of years. This movement originated with the best intentions, but, we think, from over sensitiveness and misplaced benevolence. It has been tried to a limited extent, and, we believe, with ill results in every instance. Iowa adopted the views of the ultra-humanitarians and has just arrived at the conclusion that a great mistake was committed. In all probability the death penalty for murder will be restored in that State during the present winter. Iowa papers announce this as almost certain. The *Register* advocates only a partial restoration of capital punishment, and asks that the penalty be left with the jury, arguing that if twelve men, from the evidence presented, agree that a culprit is worthy of death, he is most likely to be fully deserving of that punishment. This may be well enough, but a jury is more likely to be influenced by sentimental considerations, and the pleadings of cunning and eloquent advocates, than a judge who is accustomed to weighing facts and testimony in the cold, clear light of law and reason. But we believe there is nothing so likely to act as a preventive upon the man of violence and brute passion as the certainty of an ignominious death as the consequence of taking the life of another unlawfully. Let the idea that "hanging is played out" prevail as it did for awhile in New York among the criminal

classes, and the ruffian who robs for a living will have little hesitation in adding murder to his lesser guilt if life stands in the way of plunder. Any penalty short of death, no matter how severe, affords a possibility of ultimate escape. Pardon may follow a term of prison service and the chance of flight always remains. But the sure execution of the extreme penalty after conviction has a terror hanging around it that nothing else can bring to the criminal mind.

The blasphemous and irrational teachings of self-appointed representatives of Deity, who wait on the condemned with promises of a sure passport into the heavenly kingdom on a mere expression of faith in the Savior, have much to do in robbing of its intended severity the death penalty for murder. What a shocking sight it is to a person of common sense to behold a hardened wretch, whose soul is stained indelibly with human blood, shouting and boasting on the scaffold of the short cut he is about to take into the full glories of the sinless and sanctified! "A murderer hath not eternal life abiding in him," has been pronounced by the same authority as that which commanded the death penalty. And to think that a wretch who is pronounced unfit to live among sinful men can be prepared, by confessing Christ to a preacher, to be thrust out of this world into companionship with the Immaculate God and the Holy Ones who surround his throne, is horribly repugnant to common sense as well as his divine decree. Some infatuated creatures, about to die for their crimes, have even been led by the false doctrines of "blind guides" to rejoice in their guilt, because it was the means of bringing them to the hope and exultation in the bliss awaiting them as soon as they should be choked to death! Teachings that lead to such ghastly absurdities are alike subversive of correct principle and injurious to the welfare of society, contradicting the word of Deity and stripping of half its terrors the penalty designed to frighten the criminal soul and check dark deeds of blood.

Nations and States will find that God's plan is the best. They may tinker and patch up devices designed to supersede it, but experience will demonstrate that he knows more than they all. He made man in his own image, and to protect that life which he imparted he pronounced the death penalty on the murderer, for this life, and everlasting punishment for the shedder of innocent blood in the eternal life that is to come. Let his law be honored by all the governments of earth and when a guilty homicide suffers the earthly consequence of his awful crime, let his blood be spilled upon the ground as an offering for his sin, instead of strangling him to death like a dog, which does not fulfill the law and is a mode of punishment unworthy of any Christian community.

A WARNING.

THE Washington correspondent of the *Cincinnati Gazette* considers the press of the country will perform good services by warning disinterested persons against going to the capital with the expectation of obtaining Government employment. He says:

"It is a great mistake to suppose that the recommendation of influential men, even if there happens to be a senator or representative on the list, is sufficient to secure a position in any of the departments. There are now in Washington hundreds of good clerks of both sexes who within the year have been discharged because of the necessary reduction in the force of the departments. These are well acquainted with the personnel of the various offices, and the moment an opportunity for an appointment opens they know it. Those in charge are always ready to take some of these back whenever a place can be made, and this watchfulness added to the fact that this class was only dismissed because the diminished appropriations made it necessary, virtually closes the way to new applicants. In the next place the rolls of the Departments are full. It is doubtful whether twenty vacancies, which the real needs of the service require to be filled, exist to day. The files of every office are loaded with applications, and many of these contain the names

of some of the most influential men in the land. Day by day these, increase and are filed away where day by day the dust settles over them practically for ever. Gen. Boynton gives several instances of the distress occasioned by parties going on, confident of obtaining a position, but who meet with the usual refusal, and who actually did not have money enough left to bear their expenses home."

The above furnishes a timely warning to the three "Liberal" delegates who have been moving all creation to raise eleemosynary funds to carry them to the seat of Government, that they might each labor in his own particular way for a place and a salary, while doing a little incidental dirty work to please their anti-Mormon confederates in Utah. True, the correspondent's remarks are intended to apply directly to offices at the capital; but they are equally applicable to the case in question. So, that we may do our part with the rest of the press, we give them the benefit of this warning, that they may ponder it in their thinking apparatus and perhaps be led to save time, money and the chagrin that follows failure.

However, their time is not worth much, the money, if they should happen to get enough for board and traveling, will cost them nothing except the long effort to scrape it together, and they have become accustomed to disappointments and defeat in their repeated unsuccessful plots against the "Mormons." So, perhaps this warning will be in vain. Never mind. The consciousness of having done our duty will be our reward whatever may be the consequences.

WINE, ROSY WINE!

"POUR out the Rhine wine," sings the disciple of Bacchus as he joins his boon companions in deep libations, not to the fabled gods of classic Greece but to the powerful deity of the period-appetite. Yet who knows what he drinks, from bottles labelled with "the choicest brand?" Imported wine costs big money, and the vintages of southern Europe are much prized in America, even in the grape-growing sections of the Eastern States and vine-clothed California. But modern chemistry produces cunning arts, and if those who well know tell the truth, much of the highly valued imported wine is villainously concocted and its deep imbibers are deeply defrauded.

M. L. Bamberger, a wholesale wine dealer of Berlin, has published a work exposing the nefarious business of adulteration in wines. He has given the component parts of the various brands on sale in Germany, from the chief wine districts of France, Germany and Spain. Every sample analyzed contained deleterious ingredients. Very few were manufactured from the grape, and some were composed entirely of chemicals without a particle of natural fruit juice. That adulteration is carried on to a large extent even in California, where the cost of wine production is so small, is acknowledged even by dealers in the article. Taking a "simple glass of wine" is often a very serious matter, and there should be small wonder that the draining of the wine cup over night is the sure precursor of a terrible head in the morning.

When the "Word of Wisdom" was given, in which it is said that the drinking of wine "is not good, neither mete in the sight of your Heavenly Father, save in offering up your sacraments before Him," one of the reasons for this important revelation was declared to be, "in consequence of evils and designs which do and will exist in the hearts of conspiring men in the last days." A word to the wise is sufficient. The foolish will not receive counsel. "What harm is there in a little wine?" Very little, perhaps, to those who who can govern appetite. But is that wine which is called wine? Who knows? Even experts are sometimes deceived by vile decoctions flavored to a charm. And that of which the ancient sage declared, "it biteth like a serpent and stingeth like an adder," is rendered doubly dangerous in these latter days by the

"evils and designs of conspiring men."

The wisdom of the provision in relation to the sacramental cup can thus be perceived. Wine is permitted for the purpose of "offering up your sacraments before Him." But it is said, "behold this should be wine, yea, pure wine of the grape of the vine, of your own make." This is very pointed. What you use should be wine. Not a chemical compound, produced in the laboratory, instead of the vineyard. "Pure wine," expressed from the luscious grape, the lovely fruit that, hiding under the beautiful green leaves, is ripened by God's sunshine, while it drinks in sweetness from the elements to garner them up for man's prudent use. And to be sure that it is pure, let it be "of your own make." This, no doubt, is the kind of wine which is said "maketh glad the heart of God and man," and which the Savior promised his disciples to drink with them "new, in His Father's kingdom."

But even this pure stimulant is pronounced by the voice of wisdom to be "not good" as a beverage. As a medicine, and a help to the feeble, or on rare occasions, a little pure wine may be permissible and good. But the tendencies of the age are intemperate, and excess is so dangerous and destructive to mind and body that Divine wisdom has prudently placed a ban upon its general use. "Wo unto the drunkards of Ephraim!" has a meaning and a warning which the seed of Joseph should not despise in these latter times. And while the world ought to be cautious in drinking care in what they think is "wine, rosy wine," but which may be nothing but disguised filthiness and bright-colored death, the Saints should learn wisdom, and while guarding against the deceptions of conspiring men, refrain even from the improper use of the pure juice of the grape of their own make, which brought shame to Noah of old, and has led many of his descendants to ruin and degradation. When wisdom rules and appetite is held in by the reins of reason, when righteousness is established and the curse is removed from the earth, the children of the covenant will be free to use all the elements and products that bring joy and gladness to the heart; and wine, rosy wine, the pure juice of the grape, may be among the beverages that will give zest to the feasts of the redeemed of Israel.

THE BITTEREST OPPONENTS.

It appears, from the experience of Elders Stewart, Pratt, Terry, Gaff and Gonzales, in their late mission in Arizona, New Mexico and Mexico, detailed elsewhere in to-day's NEWS, that among the principal and bitterest opponents they met with were religious people and priests, preachers and teachers of religion. The recent experience of Elder Morgan in western and southern States, also detailed in to-day's NEWS, is to the same effect. At first sight this may appear incredible to some people. But similar experience has been had during the whole of the history of the Church, since its organization in 1830, and by the Elders and Saints in all lands, both in the new world and the old.

It was religious people and especially their preachers who were the bitterest persecutors of the Prophet Joseph Smith, who pursued him and the Saints with relentless hostility in Missouri and Illinois, and who were ever most prejudiced against them. In this Territory among the bitterest enemies of the people have been some religious preachers whom we could name, and a very religious ex-chief justice whom anybody could name.

Going back further in history, the Catholics and the Protestants have both persecuted and burned each other with the greatest fierceness, and Jesus Christ himself was persecuted to the death by chief priests and Pharisees, so that the dire and deadly opposition of religious people to other religious people is no new thing. Why is it so? It results from the fact that, whatever the persecuted may be, the persecutors are not what they profess to be. They are not followers of the meek and lowly Saviour, nor true servants of God. Their real master and prototype is a being of a very different character, and his works they do.