

The Australian
Workman

The

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THE AUSTRALIAN WORKMAN.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 1891.

THE CLASS WAR.

The present contest between Labor and Capital has been the outcome, not so much of altered conditions as of an alteration in the methods of Thought. The great mass—the wealth-producers—since the inauguration of the modern European system of popular education, have been aroused to a sense of their own true value and position in the State. The consequence has been an ever-increasing desire to either entirely abolish wage-slavery, or by forming defensive organisations to keep Capitalism in check and secure the most favorable conditions possible for Labor. Added to this, the immense improvements in labor-saving machinery, the increased competition in all branches of industry, over-population, and stifling taxes, have all prepared the way for the acceptance of economic truths, which bid fair to effect a complete change in our social system before very long.

From the very earliest ages, up to about half a century ago, the man who sold his wealth-selling energies to his neighbor never questioned the justice of the particular system of monopoly under which the bargain was adjusted for him. Among the nations of antiquity—even among those who had made the greatest advances in civilization—slavery of some description was invariably an established institution. The bondage of one man or one nation to another nation seems to have always been regarded as the correct thing; and the evolution of man is really nothing more than a slow, gradual move towards freedom, and the abolition of human slavery. It is not much more than a quarter of a century ago since intelligent interpreters of the Gospel justified the eternal enslavement of thousands of negroes by the Southerners on the ground that they were the lineal descendants of Ham, and the Bible specified that Ham and his posterity should for ever be the slaves of anyone who required their services. At the present time, the enslavement of the workers by the plutocrats of the world is justified on the ground that it is according to Biblical precedent. Just the same as the orthodox still endeavor to prove that, because a certain man ate a certain kind of fruit, countless millions have, and must continue, to suffer for it. The old idea of setting up an empty form and making an eternal fetish of it, is, luckily for the progress of humanity, rapidly fading before the dawn of a more enlightened age, and hence the present struggle for supremacy between the wealth-producers and the monopolists. The class war now going on throughout the entire civilized world is without doubt a death struggle. It is the outcome of intense competition, and, as long as that competition exists, the struggle between the classes and the masses must continue to exist also. The people are beginning to see that labor is the author of all wealth, and that the actual value in production of what is commonly known as capital (i.e., money) is an entirely negligible one. Machinery, implements of agriculture, means of transport, and so on, are the only

opulence, and the half-starved proletariat is scrambling over the palace walls. The trumpets of Labor keep continually calling "Unite! Unite! Unite!" and the plutocrats answer them back with the cry "We have united!"

It is wonderful to notice how the intelligent worker is beginning to hate the word "master"; how his Unions have enabled him to cultivate a manly and independent spirit, and how readily he falls in with the views of the most advanced and radical teachers of modern political economy. Equipped with unanswerable economic arguments, strong in the knowledge of his own power, and conscious of his value, the educated worker is a tremendous improvement on the hopeless, spineless, ignorant wage-slave of a few years ago. He is prepared to fight for the mass because he knows what the outcome of the struggle must be if Labor is only united and true to itself, and he recognises that, even if he does not live to reap the benefit of the coming change, his children and the ensuing myriads which are the children of his generation will. And thus it is that the spirit of solidarity sinks into his soul, lends a purpose to his life, and gives him a lofty ideal to cherish, even amid the ordinary occupation by which he gains his daily bread. The sordid employer, satiated in all the luxuries of a selfish existence, affords an ignoble contrast. Blind to all the higher sentiments which make life the poem of Humanity, eagerly struggling to increase his unholy store, using every opportunity to degrade and destroy his fellow creatures for the sake of a little extra gain, he is certainly a most unenviable production of a competitive commercial age, and one who has no claim to perpetuation on the score of *filio*. The war between the classes and the masses has not yet reached its most acute stage, but the end cannot be very far off. It may be terminated by a period of violent revolution, or it may end peacefully; in any case, the masses are almost certain to win, and, if they bear in mind the fact that, although they expect nothing from posterity, posterity expects everything from them, and act accordingly, the victory cannot fail to be a noble one. The ideal Industrial State which is looming amid the cloud temples of the future is a true New Jerusalem—a fitting finale for the Apocalypse of Labor.

When the Babylons of competition have fallen before the last trumpet of combined Labor, "The merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over them, for no man shall buy their merchandise any more"; but, under the divine reign of co-operation, "There shall be a new heaven and a new earth, and the nations shall walk in the light of it, and there shall be no curse any more."

In a word, the class war shall have ceased—

And men shall sing in golden days, beneath the golden Bacc,
The long-forgotten songs of Freedom, Justice,
Truth, and Peace:
—NIL NAL.

"THE REVIEW OF REVIEWS" AND THE LABOR PARTY.

This is the way editor Stead talks of the New South Wales Labor party in *The Review of Reviews* for September:—

Australia has been the chief centre of interest in the Empire last month. The Labor party, which holds the balance of power in the new Assembly, New South Wales, has used it, first, to support Sir H. Parkes against a vote of censure, and, secondly, to reject his resolution in favor of women's suffrage. A Labor party which begins its career by denying to one-half of the people the right of citizenship is a party which, so far as principle is concerned, differs little from the most "bloated aristocracy" of the old world. In Victoria the Government has brought in a Bill reforming the Constitution, which confers the franchise upon every woman, on exactly the same terms as it is granted to every man. The clause is very drastic. The evolution of the Labor party is

according to Biblical precedent. Just the same as the orthodox still endeavor to prove that, because a certain man ate a certain kind of fruit, countless millions have, and must continue, to suffer for it. The old idea of setting up an empty form and making an eternal fetish of it, is, luckily for the progress of humanity, is rapidly fading before the dawn of a more enlightened age, and hence the present struggle for supremacy between the wealth-producers and the monopolists. The class war now going on throughout the entire civilised world is without doubt a death struggle. It is the outcome of intense competition, and, as long as that competition exists, the struggle between the classes and the masses must continue to exist also. The people are beginning to see that labor is the author of all wealth, and that the actual value in production of what is commonly known as capital (i.e., money) is an entirely fictitious one. Machinery, implements of agriculture, means of transport, and so on, are the only items on the index pages of our civilisation which have a right to the name of capital, and they are all, primarily, the product of labor.

Now, the tendency of modern economic thought is to claim that, because labor is the creator of all wealth, it should be the owner of that wealth—that is to say, that, as the combined mental and physical energies of any nation produce the entire wealth of that nation, it should therefore be nationalised and become the property of those who create it.

Whether we, as Trades Unionists, accept this teaching or not, we are everywhere daily helping to bring it about. Each of our organizations is a step in that direction, every strike is a move towards it, every improvement in the condition of labor helps it along. Those who say that the object of Trades Unionism is "Defence, not Defence," preach the doctrine of irresolution. Unless a trades union is aggressive its power of doing good does not extend beyond the sphere of a benefit society. Labor is surrounded on every side by gigantic combinations of a capitalistic nature. Its armed foes are concealed behind every hedge; they are cunningly dug pitfalls at every corner; they are continually on the alert to reduce wages and defeat the aims of Labor organizations; and it is preposterous to suppose, in the face of such aggressive and hostile forces, that Labor can afford to preserve an armed inactivity, and merely send forth a herald from time to time to proclaim that the object of the Union is "Defence, not Defence." Labor is in revolt—in revolt against the oppression of Capitalism, the tyranny of Monopoly, the treachery of syndicates, the iniquity of rings, combinations and trusts, and against the myriads of the tyrant Competition. Hostilities between the forces of Labor and Capital have gone too far for either party to withdraw. If Capital wins, it means that the Unions will be dismembered, wages will be reduced to starvation level, and the wage-earner will lose the last remnants of those liberties which generations of free men have struggled to preserve. If Labor gains the ascendancy, it will mean the inauguration of a new order of things, in which the divine principle of Co-operation shall be the main feature; where want shall be eliminated from the world, where crime shall be minimized, and where injustice shall be trodden under foot. The war between the classes and the masses is now on, and any more bitter and prolonged a struggle is the price of

Truth, and Peace.
—NICK NEAL.

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W. T. Stead, the traditish apologist for aristocratic immoralities, like a good many other people, fancies he knows all about the Australian Labor movement; but, in reality, he has little sympathy with, and less knowledge of the progress of the new democracy, the aims and ultimate objects of which do not enter into the limited horizon of the apostles of the old school. Long before the *Review of Reviews* is as antique as the papyrus scrolls of Egypt, the "impracticable programme" of Labor will have revolutionised modern civilisation, and the "undisciplined aspirations" of Labor leaders will have marked an epoch in the world's history.

THE METROPOLITAN VOLUNTEER FIREMEN'S ASSOCIATION, N.S.W.

Grand Fire Brigade Demonstration,

To be held in the Royal Agricultural Society's Show Grounds on

NOVEMBER 9th and 10th, 1901.

Under the distinguished patronage and in the presence of His Excellency the Earl of Jersey, Governor of N.S.W.

£450 GIVEN AWAY IN PRIZES.

Nine Events for Firemen, including Engine, for eight men; Ladder, for four men; Hose, Reel, for eight men; Alarm and Rush, for eight men; Engine Practice, for six men; Hose and Ladder Race, for eight men; Hose Practice, for four men; Engine Practice, for four men; Scaling Ladder Race, for four men. All N.S.W. Fire Brigades Competing.

GRAND TORCHLIGHT PROCESSION On Saturday Night, November 7, starting Governor Burke's Statue in Domain.

GRAND MORNING PROCESSION On November 9, starting from Wynyard-Sq. Brass Band Contest.

Fire and Drum Band Contest. Dancing in the Pavilion all day. The City Band engaged.

Other Sports. Other Sports.

ADMISSION: ONE SHILLING.

N. V. WIGHTWICK, Secretary.

243 Elizabeth Street. N.B.—The Palace for the above is on View at Messrs. Harrington and Co's, George Street.

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