THE SERVICE WHICH CAPITAL RENDERS WHEN EMPLOYED BY LABOR.

AN ADDRESS GIVEN TO THE WORKINGMEN IN PROVIDENCE, RI, APRIL 11, 1886

AT THE INVITATION OF MESSRS. JAMES NORMANDIE AND JAMES BOWIE, Committee. Being one of a course of lectures upon the Labor Question instituted by the workingmen of Providence.

Ladies and Gentlemen, — After I had completed this lecture I was asked to give it a title, which puzzled me; but presently I chose two quotations, which, taken together, express its purpose.

The first is from an old lecture by Ralph Waldo Emerson: "Mankind is as lazy as it dares to be."

The second is from a cookery book by "An Old Bohemian: "If you don't sympathize with the poor, try it."

We hear very much about the "dignity of labor;" but I am cynical enough to think that this phrase is apt to be used oftener by those who don't know what real hard work is, than by those who do. Any way, a laborer's life is a mighty hard road to travel and to keep your dignity at the same time.

On the other hand, honest workmen want the truth and the facts of life: if they are hard facts, so be it. Life is a struggle with a purpose. In our material work, we are all the time trying to overcome friction; but, if there were no friction, we couldn't work at all, because we should have no fulcrum. In the higher life, if there were no conscience — no possibility of going wrong — there could be no virtue, no manhood, no progress material or spiritual. Man would be like every other beast, — a mere animal.
I shall give you this evening some hard facts, and I doubt not some of you may be offended. You may be offended with me as much as you please, but don't get mad with the facts. It won't alter them.

Remember, there are two sides to every question. What are the proceedings in a court of justice? Are not counsel engaged on each side of a disputed question? or, when one side is too poor to pay counsel, does not the court assign an able lawyer, and instruct him to present that side to the court and to the jury?

Now, I am not counsel for either side in this case. I understand, that, in your course of lectures, you desire all views to be represented. It would be impossible to crowd all the varying phases of the relation of labor and capital to each other within the limits of a single address. I shall therefore limit myself to one subject; to wit, The service which capital renders when employed by labor; and I shall only present that side as fairly as I can.

Perhaps that phrase has a strange sound, but I think you will presently appreciate the fact that laborers employ capitalists in their service just as truly as capitalists employ laborers: you can no more cut them asunder than the surgeons could cut the Siamese twins apart, lest both should die.

If I were addressing chiefly capitalists, my words would be a little different in form, but not in substance. I am myself neither a great capitalist, nor a laborer in the sense in which you understand that word. I am only an every-day sort of hard-working man.

I hardly knew how to begin this lecture, for the reason that I feel the responsibility very much of delivering a lecture, upon what is called the labor question, to men, most of whom distinctly classify themselves as laboring men. For myself, I object to such a classification being made, except for purposes of convenience.

Every man or woman who takes any part in the production or distribution of useful things, belongs to the laboring or working class, whether the work be of the head or of the hand. I have said I claim to be a hard-working man myself; and this bit of work of addressing you, which will take only an hour or a little more, is the result of years of intense work in investigating the facts of life.

I shall assume that certain facts of life are to be accepted. For instance: —
1st. That private property exists. That it exists in the nature of mankind, and is older than any written or printed laws which have been enacted by governing bodies, because it is founded in human nature.

2d. That a limited private ownership of land also exists in the nature of things; such ownership being limited by the right of the State to take land or any other private property for public use, with compensation to him who possesses it at the time of such taking, or to tax it.

I do not assume that all the laws or all the customs regulating such limited ownership of land are the best that could be devised. I think they are not always the best; but the way to better them is not to abolish, but to amend. I simply assume the fundamental idea of possession or of property in land or other things for private uses under certain conditions, being accepted as right.

These propositions are sometimes contested. But for the purpose of this lecture I may assume that you do not wish to waste your time in listening to a refutation of propositions which your own common sense has already rejected. You are not Communists.

You may be safely assumed to desire to become the possessors or owners of your own dwelling-places, with the land on which they stand.

You may also be assumed to claim the right to own the capital which you have created or paid for; whether it be in your own tools, in a share of the factory in which you work, or an interest in any other form of capital.

When you justify private property, you admit that capitalists rightly exist. The only question is — if there be any question — at what point the ownership of capital should stop; whether or not it should be forbidden, that, after a man had become possessed of one set of tools, he should be prohibited or prevented from becoming the owner of another set, which he cannot use himself, but which he may let to another man, for a share of the products, who otherwise would be without good tools. That is all the difference there is between one man and another.

Capital is a tool, an instrument, to be applied to production, to increase the abundance of things. It may be a hammer; it may be a plane; it may be a knitting-needle; it may be a knitting-machine; it may be a coined dollar; it may be a hand-loom; it may be a power-loom; it may be a factory or a railroad. These are all alike tools. One man can strike with a hammer which is his tool, who cannot direct the steam- hammer which is another man's tool. The higher you rise in the grade of work from the use of the
simple hammer worked by hand to the use of the great trip-hammer worked by the
power of steam, the more complex and the more difficult becomes the work, and the
more you substitute mental for merely manual skill. You will find, that, in the long
run, the tools fall to him who can use them best, provided you do not interfere with
the natural order and obstruct the course of events by attempting to stop a great tide
which governs all the affairs of men.

There are two fallacies upon which the alleged antagonism of labor and capital, or of
laborers and capitalists, is based.

The first fundamental error consists in the idea that there is a very large sum of wealth
set off somewhere, and perhaps concealed and enjoyed by the few, of which the many
have been in some way deprived in a wrongful or unjust manner.

The second fallacy is in respect to what constitutes labor. In other words, — as to
what is the creative power by means of which what are called the natural resources of
the earth are converted into the form of wealth or capital for the use of man.

I cannot submit to you, within the time of an hour’s lecture, the details by which the
first fallacy may be disproved. Suffice it, that, in my native State of Massachusetts, an
exact estimate of the whole capital of the State can be made. Real estate is very fully
taxed, and the sum of all the taxes is computed by the commissioner of the State.

The proportion of the tax which is assessed upon the land simply as land, and upon
the buildings or other improvements upon the land, can be separated with sufficient
accuracy to determine their relative proportions. Personal property is also taxed in
such a way, that a fairly accurate computation can be made of that part of the personal
property, or movable property, which is in the State, and that part which represents
property which is out of the State.

The census of Massachusetts, taken by Col. Carroll D. Wright, is also taken in such a
way as to check off the valuations made in other ways.

Now, there is a principle laid down in all the treatises on political economy, to this
effect, — that the actual property of any large community, like the people of
Massachusetts, aside from the land, never exceeds in its market value the market
value of the products of the same State for two, or, at the utmost, for three years. In
respect to food, we are always within less than one year of starvation.

In 1876, after the publication of the census of 1875, I compared the facts disclosed
with this theory. I was aided in making this comparison by Col. Wright, who is now
the Chief of the National Bureau of the Statistics of Labor; and we conclusively proved, that if we could become possessed of all the railroads, mills, workshops, dwelling-houses, together with the goods and wares of every kind waiting for consumption, and could convert them back into the food, fuel, and shelter which were consumed or exhausted by those engaged in their production, the whole sum and substance of the State above the land would be consumed in less than three years. In other words, the people of Massachusetts have got ahead of old Time only three years since the Pilgrims landed upon Plymouth Rock, in their accumulation of capital.

I have treated the value of the capital or wealth, which has been put upon the land, as something distinct from the value of the land itself. Land has no value of itself, except for the capital which is put to work upon it. The peninsula of Boston is said to have been purchased from the Indians for a string of beads. Remove the capital from that peninsula, and it would not be worth more than a string of beads today.

What little original fertility the soil may have had is already removed.

Thus it is that all value, — that is to say, all things which can be sold for a price, or exchanged or bartered, obtain their value from the human effort or labor which is put upon them, including land itself; but the labor is that both of the hand and of the head.

It is not surprising that men should be misled in respect to the proportion of wealth as compared to product. These great factories and works impose upon the imagination, when they are looked at separately and by themselves.

It seems as if they were founded for all time, and that he who possesses them could forever control the work of other men. They are called "fixed" capital.

But let us consider this matter. Are they "fixed"? I suppose many of my hearers work in factories, and they know something about the conditions of a factory.

What is there in any of the factories in which you work, which has not been greatly changed in the last ten years?

How much machinery is there in any factory in which you work, which is twenty-five years old?

What is there in or about the factory which has any market value beyond a single generation of thirty-five years?

There is nothing constant but change, in the factory or workshop, — nothing fixed.
Which factory does either one of you try to get work in, — the old factory, in which the owner has been unable to gain sufficient profit from the sale of his goods to keep it up in good condition; or the new factory, in which all the machinery is of the very best and most modern kind, and in which the owner possesses so large and ample a capital as to enable him to buy his stock at the lowest price?

In which kind of factory can you earn the highest wages?

In which kind of factory are the goods made at the lowest cost?

Which man can buy his material at the lowest price, — the man who has plenty of capital, or the man who has plenty of debt which he cannot pay?

Where the best materials are bought at the lowest prices, the owner can pay the highest wages for their conversion, can he not? Now, can he make such purchases unless he has sufficient capital?

There is but one answer to each of these questions. Each one of you tries to get a place in a factory in which the machinery is kept up in the best way, and in which the owner has the best credit; because you know very well, that in such a factory you will be able to do the largest amount of work with the least labor for yourselves. You know very well, that in such a factory you will earn the highest wages; and you also know, that in such a factory the goods will be made at the lowest cost.

Now, then, that factory will be both profitable to the owner and profitable to the workman. Won't it?

Then, where do the profits and the wages come from? Don't they come out of the sale of the goods?

What fixes the price of the goods? Competition on goods. Which goods bring the highest price? The best goods of their kind.

Where are they made? In the best mill of its kind.

Doesn't the owner of that mill keep on the lookout all the time to get the best workmen, — the best weavers, the best dyers, the best spinners?

How does he get them? By paying the highest price for piece work that he can afford to pay out of the price which he receives for the goods which he makes.
Neither he nor you can fix the price of the goods, and therefore neither he nor you can fix the rate of wages or of profits. If you ask too much, he must stop the mill. If he does not pay enough, then the next man will pay more.

Now, let me put another question. Which mill costs the least, — the one built 30 years ago, or the mill built today? Why, of course, you will answer the mill built today. Why? Because it takes a great deal less machinery to do the same amount of work. What is the machinery? Isn't it capital? The owner is a capitalist, is he not? What sort of fixed capital is it?

A few years ago I had the charge of building a new cotton-mill, and before it had started I proposed some change. "Well," said the principal owner, "can't you keep one end of a mill first-class until the other end is finished?" **"No, sir," said I; "neither I nor any one else can do that." This was rather an extravagant form of stating what is substantially true. What becomes, then, of the power of the capitalist to grind the laborer? The capitalist is compelled to change his whole machinery about once in every 15 or 20 years; and each year, subject to temporary fluctuations, he is able to secure to his own use a decreasing part of a constantly increasing product. He does more work every year, and every year he gets a less part of the product. Who gets the rest? The prices of the goods go down. The consumers get a part of the benefit. Who gets the other part? The people who work in the factory. Who gets the biggest share among those who work in the factories? Those who do the best work. Isn't it so?

Now look at this chart. Here is the history of a standard sheeting. (A chart was here presented, on which facts were given as stated hereafter.) It is thirty-six inches wide; weighs a little less than three yards to the pound; made of No. 12 to 13 yarn. It has always been made so from the beginning, when it was established, 50 years ago. A useful, serviceable, coarse fabric, consumed at home and exported to all parts of the world. This chart is made from the figures from more than one factory. It represents the changes which have occurred since 1840.

There is not a figure on this chart taken from a factory that has ever failed to pay its debts, that has ever changed hands from the original corporation that built it, or that has ever met with any commercial disaster. A part of the time the owners have made a big profit, and a part of the time they have made no profit at all. They have made a fair income on their investment; but any operative in the principal factories from which these figures are taken, who has saved apart of his or her wages and has put it on deposit in one of the best savings banks in Massachusetts, and has kept it there, has made very nearly, if not quite, as good an income as the stockholders in these factories, without any of the risk or fluctuation.
As a rule, the factory-operatives in all the factories of Massachusetts, who have kept their money on deposit in a good savings bank, have made as good an income as the average stockholder in all the cotton factories of the State, and I guess much more. Now, what has happened in these forty years to alter the conditions? There is a great deal more capital now, in proportion to the number of people, than there was then. There is more capital waiting to be invested today than there are people capable of borrowing it who know how to make profitable use of it. There are no more laborers in proportion to the work to be done, now, than there were 50 years ago; but the standard of life is a great deal higher. The laborer expects to get a great deal more out of life — as he ought to. And he gets it. Yet he is not satisfied, and he ought not to be. We would not be content with the very narrow and penurious conditions of 40 or 50 years ago. The world gets on, — gets on by people becoming dissatisfied, and trying to do better.

The question is, how to do better. I know of only one way: it can be stated in a few lines. The way to do better, is for the capitalist to adopt every improvement, even if he must break up good machinery and sell it for old iron. If one does not, another will. In using the improved tools, the workman may and must do more and better work in less time. If one does not, another will. Neither can work without the other: by such combined work the product of goods becomes greater, both to the spindle and to the loom, as well as to the hand. As the product increases, new markets must be found, or the consumption of goods must be increased by lowering the price in the old market. All this may happen; and yet capitalist, laborer, and consumer will all alike do better than they ever did before. The lower the price, the wider the market; the better the machinery, the higher the wages, the lower the cost, and the surer the work. These are laws which work beneficently and surely. Statute laws may be enacted by legislatures, in order to remove obstructions; but nearly all such acts become obstructions. There were at one time two thousand acts on the statute book of Great Britain, for the regulation of trade, of wages, and of commerce. They culminated in wide-spread pauperism, more wretched than can be conceived by us. Let us give beneficent, natural forces full opportunity.

You look incredulous and you ask yourselves what is he driving at? Higher wages, by way of lower cost? Equal profits at lower prices? Laborers taking more, and capital taking less, out of a lower price for goods? Capital and labor thriving together at low prices and high wages? Even so. All this sounds very inconsistent; but it is just what has happened, just what is happening. Look at it. In 1840 one operative working thirteen or fourteen hours a day turned off nine thousand six hundred yards of standard sheetings a year. One operative in the same mill in 1886 turns off nearly or quite thirty thousand yards a year.
In 1840 the work was hard and continuous, — thirteen hours a day. In 1886 there is time to comb your hair, while the loom almost runs itself; and the mill-hours are ten. In 1840 wages were one hundred and seventy-dollars a year. In 1886 they are two hundred and eighty-five dollars a year. You can buy more for each dollar of your wages in 1886, than you could for each dollar in 1840. The price of standard sheetings in 1840 was nine cents a yard. Now it is six to six and one-half cents a yard.

Capital was scarce in 1840. Nobody would invest it in a factory, unless he could earn at least ten per cent; and that took one and nineteen one-hundredths cents out of each yard. Capital is now very plenty. If there were now a fair understanding and no disturbance, there would be new cotton-mills building to-day, to meet future wants, in order to get six per cent on the capital; and it would take only one-quarter to one-third cent out of each yard, according to quality, to give it. What is it that stops enterprise, prevents the extension of all these useful arts, and disturbs everybody to-day?

Just one thing, — the attempt to take away from each one of you your own liberty to make your own bargain, in your own way. There is one thing we all have in common; that is, time. The man who controls his own time and uses it in his own way, is the man who will succeed. The man who puts the control of his own time into the hands of some other man is pretty sure not to get ahead. The man who combines with others, and who then attempts to control and regulate other men, or to dictate to us what shall be the use of your time and of my time, whether we choose to have him or not, will be pretty sure to get left as soon as the trick is found out.

Understand me fully. I do not take the slightest exception to associations of any kind, or to Trades Unions, or to any other organizations or clubs. I belong to a Trades Union myself, — to a Trades Union of the presidents of all the mutual insurance companies that insure the factories in which you work, and keep them from burning up.

We earn our living by saving from destruction by fire the tools by which you get your living. We have combined to put suitable conditions on the owner of every factory to make it safe, and to keep it safe for the protection of life and property. We cannot force him to adopt them. He controls his own business, and we control ours. Yet he does what we ask him to, to protect the tools with which you earn your living, because he can't afford not to do so. This is the right kind of a Trades Union.

When you form your associations like the old guilds, and make the condition of membership that every man shall be master of his own art, as well as master of his own time, then you will benefit yourself and everybody else. There is nothing like a club of men who are engaged in the same occupation, bringing them together,
comparing notes, teaching them to find out the value of their own work and the price at which it ought to be sold. But they must find it out for themselves, and not take the word of another man who very likely knows nothing about the work, the conditions, or the relations of the men to their employers.

The object of association is to develop your own individuality, your own capacity, and thus enable you to get all that your work is worth without reducing you to the level of the most unskilful or the most incompetent man who is in the trade. If there could be a method devised for creating and maintaining disparity between the rich and the poor, it would consist in able, skilful, and intelligent men parting with the control of their own time, and placing themselves on a level with the least skilful, the least capable, and the least industrious of those who engage in the same pursuit.

I do not say you do this. I leave it for you to find out whether you do or not; but let me tell you one thing, — if you put first-class spinners and weavers in the same place with second-class spinners and weavers, without discrimination, it will be just like packing first quality and second quality goods in the same bale; they will all be sold for just what the seconds are worth. If the goods are not inspected, they will all be sold at just what the mis-picks or bad smashes are worth, and when they are sold at the price, the owner of the mill can only pay the best weaver what the work of the poorest weaver is worth who makes mispicks or bad smashes. Another mistake which is constantly made is that the capitalist is getting a very big share of the product of almost every thing. This is not so, especially in the arts in which capital is most freely used.

Now, what are the facts? If a man could build a cotton-mill to-day, at the prices of materials and machinery, to make heavy sheetings, spending one million dollars on it, he would make in that factory goods worth about one and one-quarter million dollars every year, at six cents a yard. If he could get one-third to one-quarter of a cent a yard, he could keep up his factory and earn six per cent on his investment. What would become of the other five and three-quarters? It would be spent for materials, for labor, and for the salary of a superintendent competent to put the materials and the labor together, unless the owner were his own boss.

Some of you know what it is to work in a mill under an incompetent manager or an incompetent owner, who cannot put the materials and the labor together in a proper way. When such a fellow as that takes hold, the workman loses his wages, and the owner loses his profit and generally loses his mill. The cheapest man is the one who knows how to do it no matter what his price is. Just as the cheapest workman is the best work-man, no matter what his price is. The more he knows how the higher his price will be, and the cheaper he will make the goods. The price of the goods will be
the only limit on the price of his work. Now, take a woollen factory working on fancy cassimeres worth one dollar a yard. If the owner can get four to six cents a yard, he will keep the mill running. If he cannot, he won't. Why should he?

What becomes of the other ninety-six cents? Is it not paid out to the farmers who raise the wool, to the workmen who do the work, and to the salesmen who sell the goods? Take a shoe factory. If you put sixty thousand dollars into a shoe factory, you will turn out three hundred thousand to four hundred thousand dollars' worth of shoes a year, worth from one dollar to three dollars per pair. If the owner can get from three to ten cents a pair, according to the price, he is satisfied. What becomes of the rest,—ninety-seven cents in each one dollar, two dollars and ninety cents in each three dollar pair? Is it not all paid out for leather, for shoe-thread, and for labor? Take a pound of sugar. It comes here dirty, and unfit for use; it goes into a sugar refinery, which takes an enormous amount of capital to build and to operate; but if the owner gets one-sixteenth of a cent a pound for converting dirty brown sugar into clean white sugar, he is satisfied, and you get the benefit of it.

Now, we will take up a bigger enterprise than any which I have yet named. About one-fifth part of all the capital in the United States, of every name and nature, is today invested in railroads. There is more fuss made about the big fortunes of the railroad capitalists than of any other; but there are only one or two of them who have stolen their share or cheated other people out of it. There is no defence for such men. But there are other men who have not cheated anybody,—men of the most honorable character, who build railroads, operate them honestly and fairly, and who have made big fortunes out of them. How did they do it? Some of you live out at Olneyville very likely, or about that distance away from Providence. If an expressman owning a cart would carry a barrel of flour for you, from a store in Providence out to your house, you would give him the empty barrel for his profit, wouldn't you, provided you could not do any better? and you would feel very well satisfied with the bargain.

Very well. Vanderbilt ran a cart from Chicago to Providence, with a steam-engine instead of a horse, over the Lake Shore and New York Central railroads. He carted, or some other man did, who ran another railroad alongside of his, all the flour that you ate last year, from Chicago to Providence, about one thousand miles, for sixty-eight cents a barrel, or less; very often less. What profit did he make? Fourteen cents a barrel; no more; sometimes less. Not so much as the value of the empty barrel. What if he did make two hundred millions of dollars or more by the job, he and his father working together twenty-five or thirty years? Wasn't he a cheap man for you to employ as a teamster? Didn't he cart flour cheaply enough? Do you grudge him the fourteen cents? The people of the United States use fifty million barrels of flour a
year; and every barrel is carted, either in the form of wheat or flour, over one thousand miles.

In 1865 the New York Central, Vanderbilt line, charged three dollars forty-five cents for moving a barrel of flour one thousand miles. Last year they charged sixty-eight cents, sometimes less. The difference between these two prices on the flour consumed by the people of the United States last year was one hundred thirty-eight million, five hundred thousand dollars. Your share of the saving, each of you (for you each need one barrel of flour per year, for each adult member of your family), was two dollars seventy-seven cents a barrel. Vanderbilt made his two hundred million dollars by cheapening the cost of carrying the flour, and saving each of us two dollars seventy-seven cents, last year, on our flour. How many barrels do you use in a year, at one barrel a head, — count your two children of ten, or under, as one grown person? For every family of four, Vanderbilt saved ten dollars last year, as compared to 1865; while he made fifty-six cents profit.

Everything else that we consume is moved somewhere or somehow over a railroad, and we make a proportionate saving on every article that we consume. What do we work for? Money? or what money will buy? Obviously for what money will buy. Working people who support their families on from four hundred to one thousand dollars a year, spend one-half of their money for food, even now. What would it have cost them for the same supply of food, if Vanderbilt, and other men of the same character, had not put their capital into railroads? If you want to be free from the big railroad men, — if you are oppressed by corporations and by capitalists, — it is easy enough to do it. There is plenty of good wheat-land, — limestone formation, — good for beasts as well as for wheat, down in the back-woods of Maine, which you can buy for a dollar an acre. All you have to do is to clear it of timber, build your barns, and raise your own food. Better yet: I own a thousand acres of good land in the back-woods of North Carolina, high up above the sea, cool and healthy, — one of the most healthy places in the United States. I will give any ten men fifty acres each that will go there and make a settlement. They will be free of capital, railroads, factories, and clear of the money power. They can raise their own food, spin their own yam on hand-wheels, and weave homespun on hand-loomse, as the natives do, and hardly ever see a dollar a year, — not even a silver one. Why don't you go? Just because you can do better here. Why? Because there is plenty of capital here to be used in your service at the price of a quarter of a cent a yard on a print cloth, or five cents a yard on a cassimere.

Now, when there is a strike on a railroad, what happens? It stops your supply of food, doesn't it, and stops my supply of food. Who gets any thing out of it? When work stops, production stops, and somebody loses. Who makes? There is a better way to
get higher wages; that is, for each man to keep the control of his own time, his own hands, and his own brain, and to do the best work in his power. Then he is sure to be paid for it, and the goods will be made at lower cost, or the flour will be moved at the lowest price. The truest friend I ever had, the best cotton-spinner I ever knew, the simplest and most honest man I almost ever met, was good David Whitman. How did he begin? I believe as a back-boy; at any rate, on the lowest round of the ladder. Some of you remember him. How did he do it? Didn't he keep the control of his own time, his own hands, and his own brains? Did any body ever boss David Whitman, and tell him when to work and when to stop?

In order to get at the root of this question and learn what are the bottom facts, let us get as far away from our own pursuits as we can, so as to obtain a view of the matter from the outside. Bread is the staff of life. And, although man does not live by bread alone, we must each have one barrel of flour a year. Now, one man, working one year (or what is the same thing, three men each working one hundred days in the season) can raise wheat enough in Dakota to supply one thousand men with flour for one year. Of what use would this wheat be to us, if we could not get it? How could we get it from a place two thousand miles away, except by way of a railroad? Some people say labor does all the work, and ought therefore to have all the product. True: let labor go to Dakota, and bring the flour two thousand miles to Providence on a wheelbarrow, and it may have all the profit. I prefer to hire a capitalist to bring my barrel.

There is a big strike on what is called the *Gould* system of railroads. It is, or was, alleged that the strike will extend until it covers the whole railroad system between the East and West. Well, suppose this should happen. Who will be struck hardest, and who will pay the costs? Capitalists who own the railroads? Not a bit of it. You will. The wages of the men who are employed upon the railroads are never paid out of the capital in- vested in them. It would not be possible. They would eat up the railroads, if they ate up the capital. Then what? The wages of the men who operate the railroads are paid out of the current receipts for moving food and fuel, timber and dry goods, which you use or eat. You pay them. How many of railroad men are there? About five men to a mile, — 625,000 in the whole United States.

There are now twenty million men and women at work in the United States; and those who work for wages, earn small salaries, or run small farms by hard labor, count nearly nineteen million out of the twenty million, and consume nineteen-twentieths of all that is produced or moved over all the railroads. This body of the railroad men is one of the largest single divisions, and they are among the best paid. You pay them, each one your share.
Last year the New York Central Railroad earned its part of a profit of fourteen cents a barrel, for moving a barrel of flour a thousand miles. In their part of the work, this corporation employed 15,309 men and boys, and I suppose a few women as clerks. They paid them an average of $544.60 a year each for their work. That is to say, you paid your share to the railroad, and the railroad paid the men at this rate. This railroad business is the most wonderful thing in the world. Some of you think labor does all the work, and ought to have all the pay; and some of these shallow fellows, tonguey chaps, get up and talk about the tyranny of capital, and say that these great corporations rule the country. Well, perhaps they do. I will give you some figures.

Last year the railroads of the United States moved a little over four hundred million tons an average distance of a hundred and ten miles. You can't comprehend such big figures, unless you are used to them. What did they move? What was all the fuss about? Why couldn't they let it alone? Why couldn't they let labor do all the work, and take all the pay? They moved cotton and corn, wool and mutton, beef and pork, timber and coal, iron and groceries, what for? Only that you and I might have breakfast, dinner, and supper, a roof over our heads, some clothes to wear, some fuel to bum, and some tools to work with. What else? Nothing. Well, just for that, over seven tons were moved a hundred and ten miles for every one of us, and for every one of our families. As much for you as for me. Just as much for Terry Gallagher as for Cornelius Vanderbilt, — hardly any difference.

Think of it a minute — seven tons; seventy barrels of flour, or twenty-eight bales of cotton, or a hundred cases of sixteen-ounce cassimere, or fourteen big casks of sugar. Think of any other lot of food or dry goods, and how much work it would be to move each lot a hundred and ten miles, just to give each of us and each of our children breakfast, dinner, and supper, clothes, fuel, and shelter. What will you take to do the job, and how long will it take you? Labor does all the work, and ought to have all the pay — does it? Bid for it, then — who will do it at a dollar and twenty-five cents a ton? eight dollars and seventy-five cents for the job? That is what the great railway corporations got for it — no more. Shall I say nine dollars? Who bids ten dollars? Going, going, gone to the railroad every time; because the railroad saves you just so much work every year, as it would take to move that seven tons apiece a hundred and ten miles. If they didn't do this, how would you live, and where would you live? Do you grudge the New York Central its profit of fourteen cents a barrel for moving your barrel of flour a thousand miles? I think not — not when you understand it.

Labor does all the work, does it? This little bit of coal which I hold in my hand, which would pass through the rim of a quarter of a dollar, will drive a ton of wool, with its proportion of the steam-ship, two miles on its way from Australia, to the mill in which you spun or wove it yesterday; how much work it would do in driving the mill, I cannot measure. Labor does it all; yes, the labor of such men as Corliss, Crompton,
Hazard, and others whom you know so well. Don't they belong to the working classes? What do they work with? I will tell you. They work with such tools, that, if you had them not, you might labor again as people used to,—not so many years ago but that some of you can remember the time,—fourteen hours a day for half as good a shelter and subsistence as you now enjoy. I tell you, my friends, you must get the bottom facts; don't let shysters throw dust in your eyes; it's devil's dust, poor shoddy, it won't wash. I speak of what I know. I had nothing but my hands and my head, and a poor school education, to begin with. Every one of your children goes to a better school than I ever went to. Suppose all these railroad-men strike, and get all the profit, out of which the interest on the debts and the dividends on the stock are paid, the corporation would then be unable to earn fourteen cents a barrel for moving a barrel of flour a thousand miles.

That would put the road into bankruptcy. Who would then take it up and run it? Of course this won't happen. But suppose the men strike on all the railroads, and the price of freight is put up. Who pays it? You pay it on every barrel of flour, every ton of coal, every pound of beef which you use, or every yard of cloth which you make. Suppose you strike back when there is no profit on cotton manufacturing or on woollen manufacturing. What happens then? Either the price of the goods must be put up, or the mill must stop. Who pays for that? The capitalist who owns the mill? Not a bit of it. He waits. The men who run the railroads, the carpenters, masons, mechanics all over the country, pay for it in a higher price for goods.

Now, suppose we all strike. The measure of enough is a little more. I should like to strike, and get a little more. You would like to strike, and get a little more. The next man would like to strike, and get a little more. And when we have all struck, and all have got a little more, what have we accomplished and where are we? For the time being we have had an interruption of business, a decrease of product, a temporary scarcity; and then the same kind of a distribution goes on,—only at high prices, as it went on before at low prices. In the mean time, middle-men who happened to have a big stock of goods when the strike began will take the rise in price, and the rest of us will pay it. What else can you make of it? None of us work for money, although we think we do. We work for what we can buy with our money. The important point is, that there should be the biggest product for the least amount of work. Large product, low prices, high wages,—that is what we all want.

Small rates of profit on capital come from big production, hard work for the capitalist (and perhaps he will get rich), but easier work for the laborer, lower prices, and higher wages. That is the natural course of events,—just what has happened in the last fifty years. There never was a time in the history of this country when the general rate of wages was as high as it is now, the general product so large, the cost of living so low,
and the proportionate profit of capital so small. But we have not done yet. We waste about as much as we use, because we do not know any better. One-half the price of life is the price of food. I suppose nearly all the men and women in this room who have families spend half their earnings, or more, for food. A good way to increase their wages would be to learn what to buy, and how to cook it; to substitute a stew-pan for a frying-pan; to eat sound bread instead of hot biscuit; to learn to like oatmeal or hominy better than pale pie and dyspeptic doughnuts.

Now let us take up another branch of this subject. Who costs the most for his support? — the great capitalist, or the criminal and the pauper? We all work together, those who do work at all; and we all help support those who do not work. It does not matter where or how you assess the taxes, be they big or little, — they all come out of the product of our work; and we all pay our share, directly or indirectly, because the taxes go into the price of every thing that we consume. They fall on rich and poor alike; and no man has so big an interest in keeping the taxes down, and in saving the public money, as the man who has no property, but who depends upon his daily work for his daily bread. He can't afford to be taxed out of a part of his daily bread. Now, what does each man cost? We exchange service with each other. Very few men produce any part of what they consume. They get it by exchange.

We each of us need three or four pounds of solid food and two or three pounds of liquid food per day. The nearer the latter is to water or milk, the better for us. Each of us requires a few yards of woollen cloth and a few yards of cotton cloth, every year, made into clothing. Each of us needs a roof over our heads, and some fuel to cook our food and to warm our bodies. Those of us who can afford to keep horses for our private use, require some hay and oats to feed them with. What else do we cost? What else do you or I take out of the common product every day? I can think of nothing. I wish somebody would name something. Then I will add it to the list. Somebody says rum. Yes, better drop it. There is much greater equality in the cost of each man to the community than most people are aware of. The difference in food and clothing is more in quality than in quantity. The working-man probably wears out more clothing than the rich man, and perhaps consumes more food by weight.

If you charge the richest man with every thing that he consumes, in terms of the days of labor of other people who have provided him, without considering the price or the quality, and then charge the criminal with the days of labor which it takes to support him, and then chaise the common laborer or the skilful mechanic with the days of work which have been expended upon his food, fuel, shelter, and clothing, you will find marvellously little difference; and I am inclined to think that the heaviest cost would be chargeable to the pauper and to the criminal, rather than to the capitalist, because I am very sure that the average rental of prisons and pauper asylums (by
rental meaning interest on the cost of the buildings) is greater than the average charge for, or interest on the cost of the dwelling-houses even of well-to-do or rich people.

The capitalist and the workman make some return to the community for the cost of their support. The pauper and the criminal have made but little return; and, if the prejudice against prison-labor is carried to its full extent, they will cease to make any return at all. Then the whole cost of their support will fall upon the industrious workmen in the form of taxes, — upon you, and me, and all the rest of us. The capitalist is a great distributor, rather than a great consumer.

Mr. Vanderbilt secured to himself his share of the profit of fourteen cents a barrel for moving a barrel of flour a thousand miles. He spent what was necessary on food, clothing, shelter, etc., which he consumed; and he built a most expensive dwelling-house, of which he occupied a part, his servants obtaining their shelter in the other part. He did not consume the material put into this dwelling-house in the way in which he consumed food and clothing; but he converted the material into a permanent form, more or less judiciously and usefully, and in that process all the mechanics and artisans who did the work obtained their living.

Such a dwelling is not capital. That is to say, it produces nothing. But there is a more than ample capital in the country without reserving even the cost of such costly dwellings, for productive purposes. Nobody suffers for want of capital because such dwelling-houses have been built. There is more capital than can be put to a useful purpose to-day, in spite of this expenditure. The same principle applies to luxurious expenditures of any kind. It may be very foolish for the owner of the capital, or of that which might become capital and be made use of for further production, to spend it on fancy farms, palatial dwellings, or things of that sort; but in such expenditure he gives employment for that period during which the expenditure is being made to a very large number of persons, who get their own subsistence out of what he pays to them, and for whom there might be absolutely no work in what is called productive industry, simply for the reason, that, without their work, there is already more than enough grain, more than enough meat, more than enough timber, more than enough cotton goods, more than enough coal, for the uses which we can now make of these materials.

If people choose to live as their grandfathers did, especially if their grandfathers dwelt in England, Ireland, or Germany, half the work of life might be saved. A log house, baked beans, salt pork, and leather breeches can be had at little cost. Life was very different forty years ago, from what it is now, when there was hardly enough to go round. Then we could not afford such lavish expenditure for unnecessary purposes; and no such lavish expenditure was made, which was of any account. When capital is
so scarce that it can earn ten per cent or twelve per cent, merely as capital, without any brains behind it, hardly anybody is foolish enough to be lavish with it. But when production is so ample that there is more wool, coal, food, and every thing else in the shape of capital, than we can make good use of, lavish expenditure may be the only way in which the surplus can get itself distributed. At any rate, it is the only way in which it does get distributed. It gives a great deal of employment to those who would not get it otherwise; and, although it may not be the wisest method, it is the only method consistent with the present standard of education and opportunity.

I do not myself justify many of these lavish expenditures. I think that a man, however rich he may be, is very foolish to build a dwelling-house, which must be sold by either his children or his grandchildren, for the reason that none of them can afford to live in it, under the righteous method of distributing property, which prevails in this country.

The old saying is a very true one: "Three generations from shirt-sleeves to shirt-sleeves." Perhaps, in these modern* times, it may be four, possibly five; but that is about the end of it. Now it sounds like a very selfish and malignant principle, to hold up for approval the rule of each man for himself. But I omit the rest of the adage, — "The Devil take the hindmost;" because it isn't true, unless the hindmost is a fool himself, and is willing to let the Devil take him. Here is a man — well, we will take the late A. T* Stewart as an example. He set up a big shop, and everybody went to it to buy something, and Stewart made a big fortune, which is rapidly disappearing. How did he do it? Exactly in the way in which Vanderbilt ran a railroad. He hired the best men, distributed the goods at the lowest prices, at a small profit on each sale, but he made a big fortune out of very large sales.

Why did everybody go to his shop? In order to help make Stewart's fortune? Not a bit of it. Each one went there because he benefited himself, or thought he did, which is the same thing. He got the best goods for cash, at the lowest price. If you could only find out a way to establish a big public market here in Providence, and systemize the distribution of food, meat, vegetables, or fruit, in the way in which Stewart organized and distributed dry goods, every man of you could save ten or fifteen, and perhaps twenty to twenty-five, per cent on the price that you now pay for a comparatively poor supply of the same food.

If you can't get the market in any other way, better hire an A. T. Stewart to do it, if you can find one. The biggest problem waiting to be solved is how to distribute meat, fish, bread, beans, potatoes, and milk, etc., at the lowest cost. There is a man named Samuel Howe in New York, who has a large capital, with which he has built a big bakery. He sells the best of bread over the counter to any one who will come and carry it away, at three cents a pound. I cannot find any bread in Boston so good at five cents
a pound. It costs more to distribute bakers' bread after it is finished, and taken out of the oven, than it does to raise the wheat, or to grind it, or to move it fifteen hundred miles, or to bake it. All these elements of cost could be covered here in Providence with a profit, to the capitalist who works on a large scale, at three cents a pound. I venture to say, that, if you weigh the loaves of bread that you buy, you will find that you pay from five to eight cents a pound. What are you going to do about it? Strike? or pass a law regulating the baking of bread, which will put up the price instead of putting it down? Each man serves the other; and every man is a working man, except the drones: they are few in number, — relatively unimportant.

The capitalist does the largest service, and gets the best price per man at the smallest rate for each service. The skilled workman comes next, and gets a good price because he does good work. The common laborer does the least, and gets the least for it. What are you going to do about it? Put the common laborer on top? That is what they tried to do with the carpet-bag government down in South Carolina, when they nearly ruined the State, and reduced almost every one to poverty. When the whole thing broke down, they changed their method. I asked an old darkey in the State House in South Carolina, what they changed for? "Well, dar, boss," said he, "yer can't put i'n'ance on top of 'telligence, and make it stay dar." You cannot do it here any more than in South Carolina.

The labor question will be solved when every man and boy is given good opportunity to get good instruction, mental and manual, and an even chance in the use of the only thing that we all have in common, whether we be rich or poor, — the use of his own time. The man who comprehends the use of time, and who keeps the control of his own time, his hands, and his brain, will come out on top every time. A good way to bring these things about is to form clubs, associations, societies, or any other way of bringing men together; that is to say, bringing them into a position in which they teach themselves how to serve other people, by doing for them something that they want to have done and are willing to pay for.

In all honest work, the dollar of the man's earnings, whether measured at five hundred dollars a year, or five hundred thousand dollars, is the measure of the service which he has rendered, and for which he is paid. And it is because no man can live for himself alone, that no man can make profitable use of his capital without giving employment to some other man by such use. Capital is used in the service of labor, just as truly as labor is employed in the service of capital.

There is no Devil to take the hindmost, except the Devil has a fair claim upon him; and that is the hindmost man's own lookout, rather than yours or mine. We will do all we can to help him; but, after all, no other man can help a man who cannot help him-
self. There is always plenty of room on the front seats in every profession, every trade, every art, every industry. There are men in this audience who will fill some of those seats, but they won't be boosted into them from behind; they will get there by using their own brains and their own hands. Do they keep other men out of those seats, or do they hold other men down in order to get them? Did Vanderbilt keep any of you down, by saving you two dollars and seventy-five cents on a barrel of flour, while he was making fourteen cents? Service for service. Product for product. In these words all the great laws of commerce are condensed, and no commerce can be permanent except it be conducted under these rules.

Having thus submitted to you what I believe to be the bottom facts in regard to the existing relations of labor and capital; having presented to you reasons for my belief, that in whatever way we may attempt to evade competition, yet what may be called the method or principle of competition always has, and perhaps always will, rule the relations of men, — I may say that I believe in competition as a beneficent and constructive force, gradually but surely promoting greater equality in the division of the increasing annual product, upon which human welfare depends. We witness its occasionally destructive force, apparently working harm to individuals, just as invention appears to work temporary harm to individuals, while in the end proving to be beneficent to the whole community. In each case, however, there are seldom sudden changes. I have witnessed but one very sudden introduction of a revolutionary invention. It was not in a very important department, as you well know. The introduction of the slasher in the cotton-mill, in place of the old-fashioned dresser, did make a very sudden change in the condition of all the dresser-tenders. But, as a rule, the changes which are worked in any important department come in detail, one after another, a little at a time, giving opportunity for adjustment to the new conditions with little harm to any one, and benefit to all. If you were to attempt to analyze the progress of the cotton-mill on this chart, from a product per hand of nine thousand six hundred yards in a year, to over thirty thousand, you will hardly be able to find any single invention or improvement that has caused the discharge of a number of working-people in any one year, except in the sizing department.

The mill grows from twelve thousand to thirty-five thousand spindles. Each department is a little improved every year; so that in the end the number of operatives is about the same as at the beginning, while their product is increased three or four fold, and their wages per hour are more than double. Their wages per day are very nearly double, but no violent change has occurred. I think, however, that a part of the lack of employment for very many common laborers, during the last three years, has consisted in very important changes in machinery on the one hand, such as have rarely, if ever, occurred in such number or influence in any previous period of twenty or twenty-five years, and also in the very sudden cessation of speculative railroad-
building on the other. Colonel Wright reports to us, that, at the worst point of the last three years, there were probably one million persons out of work in the United States. There are nineteen or twenty millions engaged in all the occupations of the United States, so that even this number would be only five or six per cent of the whole; and at least one-half of this number were common laborers, who lost their work by the reduction of speculative railroad-building from over eleven thousand miles in 1872, to less than four thousand miles in 1885.

On the other hand, there are probably two or three per cent of the working population always out of work, for one reason or another, even in prosperous times; so that the difference between prosperity and adversity is like every thing else. It is a Micawber case over again. You remember that Micawber found prosperity in having a shilling over, and he was very hard up when it was a shilling under. But it was only a shilling. It measured the difference. I have also justified, to a certain extent, luxurious personal expenditures as a poor way of distributing product, which might not otherwise get distributed.

Herein, again, we may object to the method; but we must submit to it until the rich man shall be so well educated as to make the best use of the opportunity which his wealth gives him; while the poor man is being educated in the necessity of doing better work, in order to get a better subsistence. There are two very hopeful signs in the present condition of affairs. One is the better and more practical education which is provided for the rich. The other is the organization of working men in associations and clubs, which will soon become common schools for instruction in true social science, order, and industry. There are, of course, a great many common-place, vulgar, rich men, who have come into sudden fortunes, one way or another, during the last twenty-five years. I have endeavored to show you that these fortunes are seldom gained at other people's loss, but are commonly gained coincidently with the profit and benefit on the part of all who have been employed in the work from which these fortunes have been gained; but that does not save many capitalists from being a poor sort of ignorant and vulgar people.

I suppose there will always be ignorant rich men as well as ignorant poor men. Very bad for them, very bad for their children, who commonly grow up dissolute and worthless. But the matter affects such men themselves, much more than it affects the community, except so far as they set a bad example. On the other hand, the introduction of scientific education, the study of political science, and the gradual sense of obligation to the community on the part of those who have accumulated property, are bringing about a great change for the better. But here, once more, this change is worked by way of each person, each individual. It is a matter of personal character. It cannot be brought about by collective action. A vulgar, selfish, snobbish
rich man can no more be benefited or improved by joining an association, than an idle, shiftless workman can be made competent to get a better living by joining a union or a club.

You cannot get away from the personal element in this case, either in respect to those who are at the top, or in respect to those who are trying to rise to the top or to get to the front seats. When you come down to the last analysis, in any attempt to find out what makes the rate of wages or the rate of profit, you find that each man makes his own rate, and nobody else can make it for him. If you attempt to force any man to work for a certain rate of wages, and in a certain way, under certain restrictions enforced by way of the statutes of the State or by the by-laws of a club, you introduce the first step which ends in slavery. It may be called by another name, but this is what it is."

On the other hand, if you attempt to control the owner of a factory, and to dictate to him whom he shall employ, whom he shall not employ, and in what way he shall run his factory, you introduce an element of confiscation, and you take property without due process of law. You may call it by any other name, but it is spoliation. These are hard sayings, but I believe that they are facts. You may kick against facts from now to all eternity, but you cannot alter the fact. It is founded in human nature. Arbitration and conciliation by all means, provided you leave each party free, and do not restrict men or take away their liberty. When you take away their liberty, there can be no arbitration and no conciliation.

The case is analogous to laws for the collection of debts. There is no need of any law to make an honest man pay his debts if he has the means. If he has not the means, no law can enable him to pay his debts. Between right-minded men, there is no need of artificial systems, or of legal systems, or of statute laws for arbitration and conciliation. If men have not tact enough, judgment enough, intelligence enough, to arrange their own affairs for themselves, who else can do it?

We put children under guardianship because they are assumed not to have reached years of discretion. A man sometimes appoints another as his attorney to transact some technical kind of business which the other man comprehends better than himself, such as the terms on which a contract shall be made after it has been decided to make it. But does any man who is not a fool or an incapable person ever put it in the power of another man to make a contract for him, and to put him under an obligation to do or not to do certain things? Such a man will never reach the front seats, no matter how empty they are.
After all is said and done, what is the object of life to each and all of us? Is it not to develop our own individual character? to make men of us? Can we delegate this to anybody else? Life is a struggle; and its end is to produce men and women, — manly men and womanly women. I think it has been rightly said, that the Devil of the Garden of Eden was the first schoolmaster appointed to teach men that there was something higher and something better to be worked for than to live a lazy and mere animal life in any garden, however pleasant it might be. You can read these Old-Testament stories with different spectacles; and there are profound truths to be discovered in many of them, and in the myths of the past, which, when read literally, appear to be either incomprehensible or absurd.

I sometimes indulge in a word from one of the old poets, or one of the later ones, to give a little spice to my common diet of figures and facts; and I will end this with a single verse, — **Honor to him, who, self-complete and brave, In scorn can carve his pathway to the grave. And caring naught for what men think or say, Makes his own heart his world upon the way."** "Yes, in scorn for all that is base, in scorn for all that is unjust or wrong. I have been glad of the opportunity to address you. I do not share the fears of those who dread your unions or your clubs, whatever their name may be. Life is still narrow and hard to by far too large a portion, even of the people of this prosperous land; but it is a land of liberty, a land of schools, of homes, of churches. *"Of what avail the plough and sail, Or land, or life, if freedom fail?"*

It will not fail; but through many errors, by narrow and devious ways, sometimes barred by mistakes and false reasoning, this people will still move on their majestic way to take the prize of their high calling among the nations. Gentlemen, in this lecture, whether right or wrong, I have given you my honest convictions upon this burning question of the relations of labor and capital.

When it first became apparent to me that the source of all wages, all profits, and all taxes is in the annual product year by year, a little part of the product of each year being carried over to the next to begin with, as a little part had been brought over from the last to begin the present year, — when, as I say, it became apparent to me, that, with the course of each four seasons and their result, wages and profits might alike be increased, diminished, or varied in their proportion, and that even in this rich country the maximum product per person — man, woman, or child — does not yet exceed what fifty, or, including all profits, wages, and taxes, fifty-five cents will buy, and is probably less, I confess I was appalled. I have myself, in my early days, depended upon my daily work for my daily bread, with nothing saved for the future. I have worked fourteen hours a day, twelve hours a day, ten hours a day, eight hours a day, as circumstances and opportunities presented themselves. I have been as lazy as I dared to be. I know how hard it is to begin to save, and how much effort the first
thousand dollars of every man's savings cost him,—more than any other thousand, except he be so unfortunate as to lose all and have to begin over again. I feel conscious of the truth of a sharp saying of an old Bohemian, that "leisure consists in the diligent and intelligent use of time;" and he adds, "If you don't sympathize with the poor, try it."

When it first became apparent to me, that if there is a certain average product per person, whether it be forty, fifty, or fifty-five cents per day, and that necessarily by so much as some persons enjoy more must some others enjoy less of the limited product, the justification of wealth became imperative, an intellectual necessity, if I may call it so; and to that end I sought its justification. I found it in the rule which governs life in a free country, or in any country governed on principles of justice carried out with intelligence. The rule is subtle, and perhaps somewhat difficult to comprehend. It is this:—As capital increases, whether held by the many or by the few, it can only secure to itself a diminishing or lessening proportion of each year's product.' The product itself may be so greatly increased, that even the lesser proportion of it, which is secured by capital this year, as compared to last, may measure a greater sum, but yet be a lesser proportion of the whole.

On the other hand, as capital increases and is applied to useful work, it becomes more effective; thus the laborer then receives a constantly increasing share of an increasing product. It is in this way that each serves the other, and that all interests become identical. Thus has it happened in this country, decade by decade; those who do the actual work, those who belong to the working classes in the narrowest sense of that word, have received an increasing share or proportion of an increasing product, subject to temporary variations, as the effect of war or of paper money, have made the rich richer and the poor poorer, for a time, and subject soon to a similar malignant force, working in the same way, if the coinage of low-priced silver dollars is not soon stopped.

With sympathy for hardship and for narrow conditions of life, without a harsh word for discontent rightly directed, and with an earnest purpose to promote the interests of the laborer as well as of the capitalist, I have brought this matter before you, in the words to which you have listened with such courtesy and attention.

Now, my friends, although I know I have wearied you with this very long address, I wish to take this opportunity to make one practical contribution to the solution of the labor question. A few weeks ago I lectured upon the price of life, in the vestry of the Rev. Mr. Slicer's church; and while I was giving my lecture, as some of you may remember, I cooked my supper with a kerosene hand-lamp, in a cooking-machine of my own invention. I know it has been said, that the Lord sends meat, and the Devil
sends cooks," especially to this country. I hope I shall not prove to be an emissary of the latter personage. And yet it might seem that I had been mistaken for one of them, if I may judge by some of the comments which have been made upon my plans for saving a part of the price of life.

As I have had occasion to repeat to you more than once, one-half the price of life to the great majority of people of this and other countries is the price of food. I thought I might be doing a service, in suggesting some changes in the method of cooking, especially as, in the judgment of epicures, my method is very much superior to the common one. The very best cooks make more use of a stew-pan, and of the process of simmering, than they do of the frying-pan, by all odds. I thought that in showing working people how to get better food at less cost, there might be some benefit, and I still think so. Yet I have been rebuked for entertaining such an idea. You needn't save if you don't want to. Nobody can compel you to do so. Even the Providence "Journal" spoke slightingly of my stewed mutton. What would you or the "Journal" say, if I spoke disrespectfully of stewed clams, even though they are cheap?

In the eight-hour meeting in Faneuil Hall the other day, one of the speakers said that workmen did not need any instructions from myself how to live on twenty cents a day, for their food. They had been obliged to find that out for themselves. I know it very well. All I attempt to do is to give men and women a better breakfast and a better dinner for the twenty cents than can now be had. I suppose this might help those who have only twenty cents to spend. I may not be able to save you men any part of your day's labor, whether you be eight-hour men, or ten-hour men, or twelve-hour men. But isn't it true, that a good many of your wives give fourteen-hour women? don't they work long and arduously for you? Where is the housewife's trades-union? Who goes for eight hours' labor for the true head of the household? "* Our guardian angels, o'er our lives presiding, Doubling our pleasures, and our cares dividing."

Honestly, now, do they divide even with us? Who works longest now, — you, or your wife? May it not save women a little part of their day's work, to be able to get you a good breakfast, a good dinner, and a good supper, by preparing excellent dishes from low-priced materials, with the use of a hand-lamp to cook it with? Won't it be a little handy to have a machine in the house, in which a good hot breakfast can be cooked, not only while the husbandman sleepeth, but while the housewife sleepeth also? There is no devil in that kind of a cooker, whatever some other devil may be doing while the husbandman sleepeth. There may be no merit in this machine, which is so simple that one of my friends said it was like the California pump, of which it was remarked, that it was such a simple invention that nobody but a fool would ever have thought of it. That pump worked well, and I hope this cooker will.
I have explored the Patent Office, not so much for the purpose of taking out a patent myself, with any view of personal profit, as for the purpose of finding out whether any other fellow could get a patent on it or ever had. I am pleased to say, that, on some parts of the invention, patents have been in existence, and have already expired; and, on other essential parts, I could take a patent if I wanted to. I don't want to. I cannot afford to make money, even if there is money in it, without doing more work than this has cost me; and I therefore take the opportunity to publish the right way of making an Aladdin Cooker, and submit to you the plans and specifications.

Any good master-mechanic among you can make one, and a tin-man can combine with a carpenter to make more of them. I shall be glad to know what you make of this machine, how you make it, and what you do with it, after you have tried the experiment. The only caution I give you is this: — Be sure to bum good oil, not less than a hundred and fifty degrees flash test, and do not buy a lamp made in a factory where they do not fine the workmen for bad work. A mispick or a bad smash in a kerosene lamp may justify a fine upon the workman who does careless work, whatever you may say against the system in other branches of industry. But no good workman ever objects to a proper inspection of his work: it is more for his interest than for that of any one else, because good workmen earn high wages, and make perfect goods at the lowest possible cost. Under such conditions, labor and capital thrive together. You can't separate them if you try to.

I think I hear one of you remark, "He deals in hard, cold facts. Is there no mercy in his figures? Are we to toil on with no relief, — no more rest, no more leisure, than we have now, — those of us who cannot push our way to the front seats? "Far from it. There are stronger and more beneficent forces working with you than against you, slowly but very surely alleviating toil, and making more leisure and rest possible. Since the end of our civil war, which was itself a war in defence of the rights of labor, our population has increased less than seventy per cent; but all our great crops and other products have more than doubled. In this part of the country, at least, wages of mechanics and factory operatives are now higher in honest gold coin, or its equivalent, than they were in false and depreciated paper money during the inflation period which ensued after the war; while the prices of almost all the necessaries of life, as well as of most of the comforts, are a third or a half lower.

Timber and mechanics' wages keep up, and therefore rents do not decline in any great measure; but every other necessary element of subsistence is very much lower in price than at any period since 1840. Yet much remains to be accomplished. Taxation is excessive, especially national taxation. Heavy taxes are still imposed upon wool, coal, timber, fish, potatoes, and upon many other articles in a crude or half-manufactured condition. Were these taxes abated, a wider market would be opened for the
manufactures on which you work. What bars the way to the reform of the system of taxation, and to the removal of unnecessary burdens? Political jealousy and suspicion, — the support of parties without principles, rather than of principles sustained by parties. I trust we may never see the labor question become a party question; but I hope we may see the working people of this country, without distinction of party, demanding of the Representatives and Senators in Congress the remission of unnecessary taxes upon all the materials which enter into the processes of domestic industry.

Again, I repeat to you the warning: beware of extravagance in national, state, or municipal expenditures. The taxes of all kinds now take six to seven dollars out of each hundred dollars' worth of products in the whole country; and they fall most severely on those who have no property, and who may not even know how they are hurt by them. I thank you for your attention. I have little time for such work as this, therefore my address has not been condensed as it should have been.