

of them said: "You have possessed yourself of that by which we must live and which was the common heritage of us all. You are fewest, though you are first, and we do not recognize that title. You will please hand over to our tax department the full annual value of the opportunity of which you have deprived us."

Then the first cursed the four for their little discovery.—Bolton Hall, in Lucifer.

STEEL WORKERS FIND THAT THEIR WAGES HAVE BEEN REDUCED 40, INSTEAD OF 20 PER CENT.

In all the statements given to the press by the United States Steel Corporation as to the proposed reductions of wages to be made on January 1, in their mills, it was stated that the reductions would range from 5 to 20 per cent., and would average about 10 per cent. Thus, on December 15, the newspapers of the country printed the following dispatch:

New York, Dec. 14.—The statement was made to-day by a leading official of the United States Steel Corporation that, beginning January 1, 1904, about 90 per cent. of the employes of the corporation will suffer wage reductions, ranging from 5 to 20 per cent. This reduction will affect about 150,000 workmen in the various grades of the subsidiary companies. The remaining ten per cent. of the employes are members of the Amalgamated Association of Iron, Steel and Tin Workers, whose wage schedule runs to July 1, 1904.

On December 21 a dispatch from Pittsburg said:

Semi-official information was given out to-day that a general reduction in wages is to be made at all non-union iron and steel plants in the country that will average about ten per cent.

On January 5 it was reported from Pittsburg that there was dissatisfaction amongst the steel workers who had returned to work after a long idleness, and that, though they were willing to accept a reduction, they thought that their wages had been cut too much. The Iron Age of January 14 contains the old rates of wages, the new rates and the compromise rates, which the workers are willing to accept. If the reductions here shown are fair samples of the reductions made in other mills—as they probably are—it is not surprising that the workers are dissatisfied. These reductions will average more nearly 40 than 10 per cent. The least reduction appears to be 12 per cent., and the largest to exceed 49 per cent. Here are the rates for the skilled employes of the Homestead works—the scales showing

the rate of wage paid per hundred tons of output:

	Company's Men's		
	Old rate.	scale.	scale.
Heaters	\$2.72	\$1.74	\$2.00
Rollers	2.72	1.74	2.00
Manipulators	1.97	1.35	1.35
Cranemen	1.44	.87	1.23
Back table men.....	1.07	.97	.97
Greasers84	.65	.84
Bottom makers.....	1.76	1.16	1.50
Bottom makers' helpers.	1.45	.87	1.23
Pit and tong men.....	1.44	.73	1.22
Pit and tong helpers....	1.20	.65	1.07
Buggy men.....	.97	.80	.90
Recorders80	.65	.80

The above rates appear to apply to the 40-inch mill. Those for the 48-inch mill are in part as follows:

	Company's Men's		
	Old rate.	scale.	scale.
Rollers	\$5.50	\$2.94	\$3.87
Heaters	4.00	2.21	2.20
Shearmen	2.00	1.10	1.60
Heater helpers.....	1.63	1.28	1.40
Ingot yard cranemen....	1.25	.83	1.10
Ingot yard foremen.....	1.55	1.10	1.35
Pullups90	.53	.81
Guidesmen	2.25	1.38	1.85
Greasers	1.45	.98	1.25
Shear helpers	1.56	1.01	1.30
Weigh master	1.50	1.01	1.30

In the 30 and 35-inch mills, as well as in the others, dissatisfaction exists and compromise scales are being prepared.

The publication of these scales indicates how misleading and false were the statements given out by the officials of the steel trust a few weeks ago. We can believe nothing that comes from the headquarters of this trust. Deception and fraud are a part of the working capital of the trusts.

BYRON W. HOLT.

BETTER THAN DIGGING A CANAL.

A portion of a discourse delivered in the pulpit of the Vine Street Congregational church, Cincinnati, January 17, 1904, by the pastor, Herbert S. Bigelow.

Since it is proposed to spend so many millions for a canal in Panama, it is well to ask ourselves, "Precisely what good is it going to do us?"

What is a canal? It is a labor saving device. Will the canal benefit the masses? Have labor saving machines been of benefit to them?

MACHINERY AND LABOR.

We should not stop inventing machinery because inventions have not materially increased the wages of labor. We should go on with our canal, notwithstanding the fact that wages for common labor will continue to be what a man can live on and no more. We should not put a stop to material progress because, forsooth, the benefits of progress have not been equitably distributed. But it is time we had learned this fact, that of greater importance,

even, than digging canals, is the work of amending our laws, to the end that the benefits of public improvements shall reach down to the bottom of society, and not be monopolized by a few at the top.

WHERE DOES THE WEALTH GO?

With canals, and railroads, and improved machinery, wealth production has increased enormously. Yet there has been no startling improvement in the condition of the masses. Where, then, does this wealth go? There are only three places for it to go. It must be distributed, either as wages, or interest, or rent.

There has been no increase in the rate of wages corresponding to the increase in the productiveness of labor. Have we not five bridges spanning the Ohio? Mighty triumphs of civilization! Yet it was only yesterday that a father surrendered two of his four children to a charitable institution because the wage he received as a clerk in a railroad office was not sufficient to support them all. This father could not have fared worse in this country a century ago, yet those were the days of ferry boats and stage coaches and hand tools.

Neither has the capitalist absorbed a larger share of this increased production. As a matter of fact, the rate of interest has gone down, and the capitalist, as capitalist, gets less than ever before.

GROUND RENT THE SPONGE.

But not so with rent. While interest and wages have stood still, rents have gone up. On the great average, wages and interest remain on a dead level, but rents shoot skyward. When our forefathers wanted to live and work on Manhattan Island, the Indians required of them but a few strings of beads. But this generation, before it pays interest on capital or wages to labor, must pay the Astors a tribute of hundreds of millions. It is into that ever-enlarging maw of the land monopolist that the first fruits of our advancing civilization go. Ground rent is the sponge that sucks up the wealth of the nation.

THE NET RESULT.

Suppose the Panama canal should so change the course of trade that New Orleans in a decade should grow to the size of Philadelphia. The net result would be that the men who own the site of the Crescent city would be able to collect millions where now they collect thousands in ground rents, while the masses there would be no better off than the masses in the Quaker city. Without the Single Tax that canal will be of trifling benefit to the masses. The landlords will be the chief beneficiaries. The money sunk in that canal will in-

crease neither interest nor wages. It will swell ground rents. It is the people's money, but they will never get it back, until they take these ground rents in lieu of taxes.

MULLIGAN TELLS A CHRISTMAS STORY;

AND BROOKS, AN OCCASIONAL VISITOR, MIXES IN.
For The Public.

"Open that schtove dure, Mulligan! Don't ye see ut's get'n red?" called Flynn, from behind the counter. Mulligan opened the door, and closed the damper below with the remark that if Donovan didn't "pay more attintion to his juties we'll hire another fireman."

"There comes Brooks," said Flynn, as a gentleman entered the grocery door; and he went forward to wait upon his customer.

"Come in, Misther Brooks, an' give an account av yerself," cried Mulligan. "It's a long toime since ye've attinded a meet'n."

Brooks lighted his cigar, and, deliberately resting his right elbow on the showcase, and placing his left arm a-kimbow, looked steadily down the room at the company, and puffed in silence, for a space. Then, taking a long pull, removing his cigar, he projected a cloud of smoke, and said: "Excuse me. I fear my smoking may be offensive to you gentlemen!"

"That deplnds upon the brand av the seegars," answered Mulligan. "Ye moight fetch the box down an' lave us schmell av ut!"

Brooks smiled, and wigwagged Flynn, who responded by serving the cigars to the company.

"Get up, Donovan, an' lave Misther Brooks have the arrum chayer," said Mulligan.

"Keep your seat, Donovan," protested Brooks, "a cracker box is good enough for me." But Donovan got the cracker box.

"Did ye hov a merry Christmas, Misther Brooks?" asked Mulligan.

"Fine!" answered Brooks, heartily, "fine! The merriest I've had for many a year."

"And how was that?"

"I attended a Christmas entertainment at a mission Sunday school," answered Brooks. "I got more pleasure in witnessing the happiness of those poor little children, at the feast, and then, when the presents were distributed!—you ought to have seen them! I tell you, Mulligan, those babes had discovered a new world, that Christmas eve; a fairy land, full of chicken pie, candies, tin horns, wooden soldiers, dancing clowns, doll babies and everything else that a

human being could ever wish for! It was worth while, Mulligan!"

"Faith, Oi belave you!" said Mulligan. "An' speakin' av poor childen, Oi'm moinded av a case. Yez know Katie Ryan—Bill Ryan's daughter; she taches the furrst grade in the Jackson school. Katie came into our house to git war-rum, an' 'er way home, the day befoor Christmas. An' she had a big markud basket full av toys, up to the top, d'ye moind. 'An' phwhat d'ye think Oi hov here?' says she.

"Ye're not so owld, Katie," says Oi, 'but thim thrinkuds looks young fer ye!'

"Go on wid yer blarney!" says Katie.

"Thim prisnts is fer a poor little gyurl an' boy that was n't goin' to hov anny Christmas. It was this way, Missis Mulligan," says Katie. "The childer at the school was all schtand'n' round me, an' thryin' t' tell me, all at wance, all about everythin' that Santa Claus iver brought thim—all but wan. Little Mollie Tinker, about foive years old, was pull'n' at me dhress, an' luck'n' up into me face wid her big brown eyes; an' her chin quivered ivery wanst in a pholle, but she niver schpoke." So, after a pholle Oi sez to thim: "Kape schtill now, childer, till OI schpake to Mollie." An' phwhin they'd all quieted down, Oi sez t' her, sez Oi: "Phwhat is ut, dear?" "Miss Ryan," sez she. "We aint goin' t' hove anny Christmas this toime, becuse brother had t' have a new pair av shoes!" An' she never whimpered, Missis Mulligan? Oi thought me heart wud burst wid think'n' av the pitifulness av ut! An' Oi looked down into thim dhry eyes av hers, troo the tears in me own eyes, an' phwhat did Oi see but a little dark grave, wid a shrouded baby's soul lying there, alone, an' shtill!" An' phwhat did Katie do, but go to the rich Widdy Flint and tell her all about ut! An' Missis Flint, she put on 'er sealskin coat an' goes wid Katie, an' she says to Katie, sez she: 'You pick out the prisnts, an' Oi'll pay fer thim.' An', says Katie, 'there's goin' to be a resurrection of a baby's dead soul in little Mollie Tinker's house tomorrow maarn'n', plase God!' And, thank God! there was," concluded Mulligan.

It was quite still in Flynn's store for the space of a few minutes. Then Brooks said, musingly: "Mollie Tinker—child of Joe Tinker's widow?"

"That same," answered Mulligan.

"I knew him well. Took him thirty years, working at a dollar and a half a day (what time he wasn't sick, or out of work) to pay for the little cottage where they lived; and then he died. But he always paid his taxes. Couldn't dodge them, for all he had was in sight; and it didn't take the assessor long to look at it, either. In fact, Joe did a good deal more

than to pay his own taxes; for he contributed, during all those thirty years, toward the payment of the rich Widow Flint's taxes."

"How's that!" exclaimed Mulligan.

"The tax 'ferrets' have just found out that she is liable for upward of seven thousand dollars taxes, on mortgages that she has been hiding from the assessor during a long period of years!" answered Brooks. "If the rich and highly sympathetic Widow Flint, and her class, would pay their own bills, the Widow Tinker, and her class, would fill their own Christmas stockings. From seven thousand dollars, plus, subtract a basketful of toys, and there remains against the rich Widow Flint a debit of seven thousand dollars, plus! God bless Katie Ryan!" continued Brooks, "and every other heart, that responds to a touch of nature! And God pity the rich Widow Flint, and all others who fall victims of a vicious system of taxation that holds forever before the rich, temptations so alluring that few can withstand them. As you know, gentlemen, I own a good deal of property, of various kinds. And I tell you, frankly, that I haven't more than enough moral fibre to induce me to pay my taxes. Not for want of sufficient money, but simply because I do not have to pay them. There is no incentive whatever, in regard to some of them, except a sense of moral duty. In fact, personal taxation is a farce. The poor contribute what they must, and the rich, as a rule, contribute what they please. The system crushes the poor, and demoralizes the rich.

"But I'm glad I came in to-night, Mulligan; I wouldn't have missed that little Christmas story for a good deal," continued Brooks. "The circumstances of the story, and the telling it and the hearing it, have developed one gratifying fact, and that is, that everybody's heart is in the right place. All we want is a little more light." Whereupon Mr. Brooks arose, and bidding everybody good night, departed.

"A quare lad is that Brooks," said Donovan. "He is wan av those fellys thot do be all the pholle think'n'. Phwhat's the name av thot society he's belong'n' to—Whifflethree, Oi think ut is they call ut."

"Singlethree," corrected Flynn.

"Single tax, ye mane!" exclaimed Mulligan, with an emphasis of disgust. "Sure annybody can see that yous fellys hov all the light ye need!"

"Annyhow, Oi'm think'n'," said Donovan, "that a single tax wud be better nor a double tax; and if they do be raisin' the tax rate loike fer a pholle pasht, we'll soon be pay'n' thrubble and quadruped taxes, Oi do'n' know!"