

Al's wages—all there was left when it got to him—the same as before.

Moral.—First drop the big robber, who takes all over a bare living; then it will do some good to lop off the boys.

GEORGE W. PATTERSON.

Denver, Col.

#### THE "DECENT" TRAMP.

A prominent churchman of Hartford, Conn., is beginning to wonder if Hartford is not entertaining a hobo statesman unawares.

Hoboes, as hoboes, are commonplace; on a deal level, so to speak, with the same thoughts, the same thirst and the very same old tired feeling. But there is one hobo, at least, who knows human nature, and he is here in Hartford, or he was here in Hartford last Sunday morning. He met the amiable citizen on his way to church and struck him for the price of a beef stew.

"I am not averse to helping a worthy man a little," declared the churchgoing citizen, "but I want you to understand that I believe there is no excuse for your being out here hungry. You go to work, and then you won't have to ask assistance from anybody. If you want to live in this world and be happy, go to work."

"That sounds good," commented the tramp. "I've heard it a thousand times. I've heard the virtue of work extolled as though it were the source of all happiness. I'll tell you frankly, sir, hungry as I am, that I don't believe a word of what you say. I don't believe in work as a source of happiness. It isn't so long ago that our ancestors regarded laziness as an attribute of nobility. I may be prejudiced in favor of the antique opinion, but I don't believe in work."

"Yes, and you can sleep in the police station if you can't get a better place," added the churchgoer, derisively.

"That's the way with you fortunate citizens," declared Wise Willie. "You won't think rightly concerning tramps. You never realize that we are, as a rule, the victims of a social system devised in the interest of the rich and the well to do. Talk about work's being a virtue. We die, or become tramps, which is about the same thing, from the everlasting monotony of work. There's a social collapse behind every decent tramp on the road."

"What do you mean by a decent tramp?"

"A tramp that is not a criminal. I mean the man who has started out in life supporting a little family by, say, filing a piece of iron in a factory. Fil-

ing day in, filing day out. Stop and think. Did the fatal monotony of that ceaseless filing ever occur to you? The man files till sickness, debt, and perhaps death, invade his household. By and by his mind reacts, and he says: 'Work's no good. It doesn't support me. I hate it. I won't work any more.' Then he loafes around awhile, and gradually becomes a tramp. How do I know? Just as I know I am alive this minute. By experience. I've been a tramp ten years. I've walked with them, ridden with them, bunked with them as one of the bunch. Talk about work. Half the work done in this world is a damage to it. Making booze, making guns, making tobacco, making opium, and making other things that are useless or destructive, or both.

"Boss, did it ever occur to you that the tramp is the man who finds out how little the real necessities of life are? I can live on 15 cents a day, and I don't believe I have as much cold and sore throat as you do. Why? Because I'm long on fresh air and always a little shy on grub. What I lack in grub I make up in fresh air, and a man needs the air most. I beg a little—not much. I consider that about as respectable as the protective tariff, and really a good deal the same kind of a thing. Everything is relative. The man who needs, the least is the richest, and on the whole I am better off than I was when I was consuming iron filings ten hours a day six days in the week, and by way of recreation getting moderately drunk on Saturday night."

He got the 15 cents.—New York Evening Telegram of March 11.

#### THE "RACE PROBLEM" IRRELEVANCY.

Editorial in Chicago Chronicle of June 18.

It is sickening to see newspapers and statesmen and sociologists and preachers putting on big glasses, and the general expression of the owl, and setting themselves to the study of the "race problem."

It is nauseating to see them set about the study of this alleged problem by traveling in the Southern States and collecting the opinions of "colonels" and "professors," and others to the effect that the Negro is not fond of work; that he is inferior to the white man in the reasoning power; that miscegenation in the South has ceased, and that, perhaps for that reason, the Negro is grossly immoral—much more so than the Caucasian; that the Negro has no

creative faculty, and so on indefinitely as though all that had anything to do with the case.

All this goes upon the assumption that there is a problem as to what to do with the Negro—whether to send him to Africa or to hades—and that we must find out wherein he differs from the white man before we can solve this problem.

There is no such problem. There is no race problem at all before the American people at the present time, but there is a political question respecting the Negro. He has been declared a citizen and clothed with the rights of a citizen by the constitution of the United States. The question is whether the constitution in this respect shall be set at defiance—whether citizens shall be robbed of their constitutional rights and nothing done about it.

The question whether he is intellectually or morally inferior to other citizens has absolutely nothing to do with the case. If citizens of one description may be robbed of their rights because they are inferior to others in reasoning faculty or morals, so may citizens of any other description, and there will be no constitutional rights for any one save those who can get possession of the guns and maintain their own intellectual and moral superiority by force of arms.

There is no more sense in this running about collecting opinions about the Negro with a view to getting an excuse for robbing him of his rights than there would be in gathering a lot of well-selected opinions about Bohemians or Italians or Norwegians, with a view to disfranchising their descendants and making political pariahs of them, and leaving their civil rights without defense for all generations to come.

There is another question. The fifteenth amendment provides that no State shall deprive any citizen of the right to vote on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude. That does not repeal or supersede the fourteenth amendment. It does not prevent a state from depriving a citizen of the right to vote on some other account, but if a state does deprive a citizen of the right to vote on any other account except crime, then, under the fourteenth amendment, it is liable to loss of representation in congress and the electoral college.

Now comes the question: The Southern States disfranchise the

blacks really because they are blacks, but they dodge the fifteenth amendment by falsely pretending to disfranchise them for some other cause—because they cannot prove that they or their fathers or remote ancestors were voters before the war. The fourteenth amendment, therefore, applies, and the question is whether it shall be enforced—whether those states shall be represented in proportion to the number of their inhabitants who are permitted to exercise political rights, or whether some of their inhabitants shall make political outcasts of others, and still represent them in the national councils.

Statesmen would do well to address themselves to that question. It is mean and cowardly in them to evade that question, and seek to blind the people by raising a dense smudge about such utterly irrelevant matters as the comparative reasoning power or morality or industry or complexion or anatomy of the citizen of African descent.

#### THE RELIGION OF HUMANITY.

The Rev. Herbert S. Bigelow spoke on this subject at the Vine street Congregational church in Cincinnati, June 21.

Do we love our fellowmen? Do we wish them all well? Have we universal good will? Are we willing to fight for their rights? Do we make their wrongs our own? Are we friends of the stranger, of the naked, of the sick, and the prisoners? Is our heart with the emancipators? Do we feel it to be the supreme mission to preach the gospel to the poor; to preach the gospel of justice and hope for the poor; to heal the broken-hearted; to preach deliverance to the captives; and liberty for the bruised and oppressed children of toil?

That is enough. That is religion. That is the badge of discipleship. To reduce the elaborate doctrines of theology to that simple formula of good will to man, and to exalt deeds of loving kindness above the worship of the temple, that is the service which Jesus rendered the world.

A week day spent in honest, earnest work is holier than the Sabbath of the Pharisee. The fittest place to worship is at the altar of human need. No man is saved until he becomes a savior. A redeemed soul is one that is inspired with aspirations for the public good.

I was standing on a street corner waiting for a car. Beside me were

two young men. There came along a squatty little man, with red face and large stomach. He wore the collar of some religious order. On his vest there was displayed a gold cross. The two young men looked at the wheezy cleric, then looked at each other and laughed. Why did they laugh?

I suppose they were struck with the incongruity between that stomach and the cross.

These young men got their car. "All about the awful accident," cried a newsboy. They bought a paper. They looked over the same page and read. Two men had been working in a boiler. One was white and the other colored. The white man had a family and the colored man was single. Some one, forgetting that the men were there, opened a valve which sent a rush of scalding water into the boiler. Both men sprang for the ladder. "Go first. You're married," cried the colored man. The white man escaped. His black comrade perished.

The two young men, after reading the story, looked at each other. They did not laugh this time. They were sobered. They were moved by that sublime sacrifice. Neither would they have laughed at the cleric, if they could have felt that he would have given his life, or even sacrificed a dinner, now and then, for the sake of truth and humanity.

In the city of Cleveland, last winter, a man was taken to the pest house and died of smallpox. This man's neighbor was very poor. But not so poor as the widow. So the neighbor made a home for her and tried to comfort her in her sorrow. In a few weeks the widow died in child-birth.

The neighbor and his wife called on the Director of Charities. They told their story honestly, as investigation proved. They did not ask the Director to help them to any charity. They merely wanted to save the body of the widow from a pauper's grave. They could not pay for a grave. But they wanted to arrange to buy it on the installment plan.

They not only did this, but they adopted the baby. What are the libraries and universities of our millions compared to the benefactions of these heroic poor who bury the dead and feed the helpless out of their pitiful store?

To many it would seem strange to speak of the sacrifice of the black man in the boiler as an act of wor-

ship. When we speak of religion we think of stained glass windows, and eloquent sermons, and gold crosses and catechisms. We do not think of the poverty which shares its crust with widows and orphans. Ah, how suffering humanity ought to love those heavenly words: "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these."

"The religion of humanity!" Would you know what it is; what it hopes for and what enthusiasm it kindles in the hearts of men? Listen, then, to these words of the revolutionists who died in the streets of Paris:

Citizens, do you picture to yourselves the future? The streets of the cities flooded with light, the green branches upon the thresholds, the nation's sisters, men just, the old men blessing the children, the past loving the present, thinkers in full liberty, believers in full equality, for religion the heavens, God priest direct, human conscience become the altar, no more hatred, the fraternity of the workshop and the school, for reward and penalty notoriety to all, labor for all, law, over all peace, no more bloodshed, no more war, mothers happy.

#### THE RECENT ENGLISH LAND TAX BILL.

From the Liverpool Financial Reformer for June, 1903.

Few, if any, political questions have made such progress in public opinion during the past few years as the question of the taxation of land values. But there is the danger, as it becomes popular, of its being dealt with more on the lines of expediency than of justice. The bill that formed the subject of the recent debate in the house of commons affords a good example of this. On the land of our native country we must live, move, and have our being; from the land alone can labor produce the necessities and comforts we require. By force and fraud, in the past, this land, access to which is a necessity of our very existence, has been made the private property of a numerically insignificant section of the people. We live and work on our so-called "native land" by their permission, and upon condition of paying them for that permission. Where it has suited the landowners to have men on the land, they, upon payment for the permission, have graciously allowed men to live; where it has suited their caprice to make the land a desert handed over to deer or grouse, they have expelled the inhabitants. Where they have had a fancy for large holdings, the people have been cleared off the small holdings, and large farms been created. Where they chose to allow our mineral wealth to be worked—