

MISCELLANY

GIVING WORK.

For The Public.

Was't you who said that giving work
Was such a thing to do?
Say, look-a-here, you funny man,
I want a word with you.

Now, what is there in work itself
That makes it such a treat?
It isn't work we're looking for,
But things to wear and eat!

Man tries to get at what he needs
With just the least of toll,
So what's the use of making work
And locking up the soil?

Old Mother Earth holds all we want,
Just let us get at her!
Just let the word go out she's free,
And see the people stir!

Holy Moses! what a rush!
See them leave the slums!
Kids a-skipping on before,
Then the drunken bums.

Hear the wages climbing up!
Hear the rents come down!
Hear the builders building homes
All around the town!

So you think it's work we want?
And I say it's land.
Even money has no pull
When we've room to stand.

Perhaps you meant it just for fun,
You funny, funny man!
That talk of giving others work
Is such a funny plan!

W. D. McCRACKAN.

RESULTS OF THE TEXAS STORM.

Extract from a private letter from Houston, Tex.

We escaped without loss of life in Houston, though there were several narrow escapes. I suffered no damage beyond fences laid low and shade trees badly demolished. However, I do not care to pass another such four hours (from ten till two was the hardest blow with us). Houston would have had a lot to say about her loss of property had not everything been overwhelmed by the thousand times worse calamity at Galveston. So universal is the woe that I have not seen a tear shed. Men have related as calmly the loss of wife and children as I would mention the blowing down of my fences. The personal sorrow is lost in the universal sorrow, and to weep for your own would seem selfish.

The survivors, and particularly those who worked for days helping the living and burying the dead, when they did get away from there were hardly rational—some have lost their minds, at least temporarily.

No man can make a Fourth of July speech to-day and leave any doubt as to which party he belongs to.—Hon. Wm. Jennings Bryan.

WHICH PRESTIGE WILL YOU CHOOSE?

It is said that if we voluntarily give up the subjugation of the Philippines we shall lose our prestige in the world.

Ah, yes! We shall indeed lose our prestige with the land robbers; our prestige with the oppressors of weak peoples; our prestige with the swash-bucklers who are constantly spoiling for a fight; our prestige with the scoffers at democratic institutions; our prestige with the devotees of despotic rule. Yes, with them our prestige will be irretrievably gone.

We shall even be in danger of being regarded the world over as an honest people; as a just, generous, noble and liberty-loving people; as a people of such moral greatness that, in spite of the intoxicating seductiveness of victory, it may be counted on always to listen to its conscience and to overcome all false pride in repairing wrong done and in vindicating its high principles; a people so truthful that its word can always be believed; a people so upright that the powers of the world will feel instinctively inclined to trust it as the safest general arbiter in the peaceful adjustment of their differences.

Here are the two kinds of prestige, one of which we may lose, and the other of which we may win.

Americans, proud of your country, which will be your choice?—Hon. Carl Schurz, in New York, September 28.

TWO PHASES OF "PROSPERITY."

For The Public.

"When you were a slave, Uncle Remus, did the Master share his 'Prosperity' with you?"

"Sure, Boss, I always had a 'full dinner pail.' Master bought me all the clothes I needed and gave me house-rent and fire-wood free. When Master wanted a well dug he let me dig six feet, and they hired a white man to dig the rest, for it wouldn't do to risk my life underground. When any of my family was sick the doctor came without cost to me. Master never laid me off, for want of something to do, until I was too old to work. Then he'd give me and the old woman board and clothes, until the undertaker came around, when his bill was paid, too."

"What share do you get, Pat, when the 'Company' is 'prosperous,' especially when the 'prosperity' is 'unparalleled'?"

"Well, your honor, I've got the 'full dinner pail' with the help of the children at the 'breaker.' I can get clothes at the 'Company store' at good stiff

prosperity prices. I pay rent to the Company for the shanty I live in. Coal at the market rate, I can also get. My work is all underground, blasting rocks with powder, which I buy from the Company at more than twice the price I'd pay at the powder mill. I am paid by the ton. When 4,000 pounds tips the Company's scale, they call it a ton. Whether I'm sick or well the Company's doctor has to be paid out of my wages. I am 'laid off' half the year without work or wages, so that an 'understanding among gentlemen' can put up the price of coal to the consumer. When I am too old to work, there's the almshouse over the hill, and 'the boys' are always good enough to take up a collection to have me put under the sod."

H. V. H.

"BE ASSURED, MY GOOD MAN."

From "The Two Paths," by John Ruskin. Page 231 in edition of 1859, published by Smith, Elder & Co., London.

Nothing appears to me at once more ludicrous and more melancholy than the way the people of the present age usually talk about the morals of laborers. You hardly ever address a laboring man upon his prospects in life, without quietly assuming that he is to possess, at starting, as a small moral capital to begin with, the virtue of Socrates, the philosophy of Plato, and the heroism of Epaminondas. "Be assured, my good man," you say to him, "that if you work steadily for ten hours a day all your life long, and if you drink nothing but water, or the very mildest beer, and live on very plain food, and never lose your temper, and go to church every Sunday, and always remain content in the position in which Providence has placed you, and never grumble, nor swear; and always keep your clothes decent, and rise early, and use every opportunity of improving yourself, you will get on very well, and never come to the parish."

All this is exceedingly true; but before giving the advice so confidently, it would be well if we sometimes tried it practically ourselves, and spent a year or so at some hard manual labor, not of an entertaining kind—plowing or digging, for instance, with a very moderate allowance of beer; nothing but bread and cheese for dinner; no papers nor magazines in the morning; no sofas nor magazines at night; one small room for parlor and kitchen; and a large family of children always in the middle of the floor. If we think we could, under these circumstances, enact Socrates or Epaminondas entirely to our own satisfaction, we shall be

somewhat justified in requiring the same behavior from our poorer neighbors; but if not, we should surely consider a little whether among the various forms of the oppression of the poor, we may not rank as one of the first and likeliest—the oppression of expecting too much from them.

THE COAL STRIKE A PHASE OF THE LAND QUESTION.

A circular now being distributed in New York.

The coal strike is but another phase of the land question. If it were possible for all coal miners to take up as much of the idle coal lands as they could work, it would be impossible for the rapacious mining companies to get them to work for the miserable pittance against which they are now striking. And why should they not be allowed to take up the unused coal lands? Is there any good moral reason why any man should not have at least as much right to stake out a claim on unused coal lands as he now has on a newly discovered goldfield? No! But in answer to this question we are told that somebody owns the coal lands, and has a sign up: "No Trespassing." Somebody has bought the land from someone that bought it before, and the title to it can be tracked back to a grant from a foreign king, or to a grab from an Indian tribe. By the common consent of mankind, based upon the sanction of a system that has long since outgrown its usefulness, this kind of a title to land is respected and defended by the people.

In these days of tremendous mechanical energy, the values that attach to land in cities or mining districts rapidly overtake the amount of taxes that the community exacts from the owners. Consequently there is an incentive for man to accumulate much more land than he can use with a view of selling out later at a profit. This is why more than ten times the area of coal lands is owned than is operated.

In thus keeping the miners off the unused lands, the owners are driving them into the clutches of the oppressive companies who are now standing behind the military power of the state and saying that they have "nothing to arbitrate." And why should they arbitrate? They have the legal and moral right to go into the labor market and hire workmen at the lowest rates, just the same as they buy their machinery and supplies at the lowest prices.

As long as the people will allow their lands to be held without exacting a fair rental from the holders, they can expect no other conditions than have

been prevailing for many years in the coal fields.

Let the people apply the remedy by levying a tax on land values (irrespective of improvements) and the companies would soon be bidding against each other to get miners to work for them at wages that would be at least as high as what they could earn by forming their own companies and working the idle lands. In other words, let the people enact a law known as the "Single Tax," that would say to the owners: "Yes, you may keep all the land you wish—use it or not—but you must pay into the common treasury that sum per year which would be offered by anybody that wanted to work that land." It would then at once become a question as to whether the companies should work all their lands or give them up to cooperative companies formed of miners out of work. In either case strikes would cease, wages would be high and price of coal would be low.

A PROPHECY AS TO THE FUTURE OF AMERICA.

In the midst of so many college and university addresses at the present time, it is well to read and deeply consider an address that was delivered at the formal opening of the Johns Hopkins university at Baltimore September 12, 1876, by Prof. Thomas H. Huxley, on his first visit to this country. The following are the concluding chapters of it:

I constantly hear Americans speak of the charm which our old mother country has for them, of the delight with which they wander through the streets of ancient towns, or climb the battlements of mediæval strongholds, the names of which are indissolubly associated with the great epochs of that noble literature which is our common inheritance; or with the blood-stained steps of that secular progress, by which the descendants of the savage Britons and of the wild pirates of the North sea have become converted into warriors of order and champions of peaceful freedom, exhausting what still remains of the old Berserker spirit in subduing nature, and turning the wilderness into a garden. But anticipation has no less charm than retrospect, and to an Englishman landing upon our shores for the first time, traveling for hundreds of miles through strings of great and well-ordered cities, seeing your enormous actual and almost infinite potential wealth in all commodities and in the energy and ability which turn wealth to account, there is something sublime in the vista of the future. Do not suppose that I am pandering to what is commonly understood by national pride. I cannot say that I am in the slightest degree impressed by your bigness, or your natural resources, as such. Size is not grandeur, and territory does not make a nation. The great issue, about which hangs a true sublimity, and the terror of overhanging fate is what you are going to do with all these things.

What is to be the end to which these are to be the means? You are making a novel experiment in politics on the greatest scale which the world has yet seen. Forty millions at your first centenary, it is reasonably to be expected that, at the second, these states will be occupied by two hundred millions of English-speaking people, spread over an area as large as that of Europe, and with climates and interests as diverse as those of Spain and Scandinavia, England and Russia.

You and your descendants have to ascertain whether this great mass will hold together under the forms of a republic, and the despotic reality of universal suffrage; whether state rights will hold out against centralization, without separation; whether centralization will get the better, without actual or disguised monarchy; whether shifting corruption is better than a permanent bureaucracy; and as population thickens in your great cities, and the pressure of want is felt, the gaunt specter of pauperism will stalk among you, and communism and socialism will claim to be heard. Truly America has a great future before her. Great in toil, in care, and in responsibility; great in true glory if she be guided in wisdom, and righteousness; great in shame if she fail. I cannot understand why other nations should envy you, or be blind to the fact that it is for the highest interests of mankind that you should succeed; but the only one condition of success, your sole safeguard, is the moral worth and intellectual clearness of the individual citizen. Education cannot give these, but it may cherish them and bring them to the front in whatever station of society they are to be found; and the universities ought to be, and may be, the fortresses of the higher life of the nation.

May the university which commences its practical activity to-morrow, abundantly fulfil its high purpose; may its renown as a seat of true learning, a center of free inquiry, a focus of intellectual light, increase year by year, until men wander hither from all parts of the earth, as of old they sought Bologna or Paris or Oxford, and it is pleasant to me to fancy that, among the English students who may be drawn to you at that time, there may linger a dim tradition that a countryman of theirs was permitted to address you as he has done to-day, and to feel as if your hopes were his hopes and your success his joy.—Science and Education Essays, pages 259, 260 and 261.

—Correspondence of Brookline (Mass.) Chronicle.

GIVE JUSTICE RATHER THAN CHARITY.

Less charity would be needed in this world if more justice was dispensed. Fairness, impartiality, absolute honesty in dealing with one's fellows, these are more to be desired than benevolence.

If the employer would pay fair wages there would be no demand for free hospitals and free soup kitchens.

If we sent less rum to dark-skinned savages we need send fewer missionaries.

If we paid wage-earning women a fair recompense for their work we need not have work girls' lunch-